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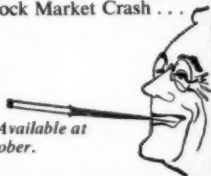
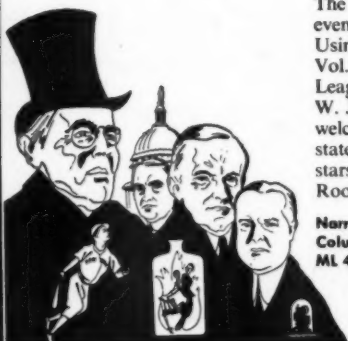
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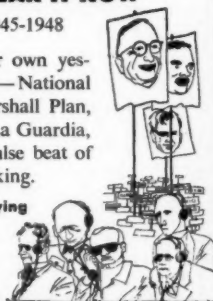
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The American RECORD GUIDE



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American Music Lover



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Editorial Notes

▲THERE IS MUCH going on behind the scenes in the record industry these days. Competition is keen. While the big companies have the foremost artists and orchestras under contracts, the smaller companies are exploiting new and promising talent. But what is more important, they are bringing out unusual and seldom heard works of music, which are in the main performed by competent, if not seasoned, artists. Many musical works, especially operatic ones, which the public had every right to think would be sponsored by the big companies, are materializing via unexpected channels. If the performances are not of the quality and character of the great ones of the past, they satisfy those who are eager to have the music in reproduction.

Recently we discussed radical changes in the record industry with a few critic friends. "The most healthy sign of public interest," said one, "is the growing acceptance of performances by lesser known artists and orchestras. Apparently, hero worship doesn't prevail with everybody in this country. We have been nurtured on highly efficient, well-oiled musical ensembles, widely publicized by alluring advertisements. This has prevented a great many people from realizing that we do not always need the best to make a musical performance enjoyable or worthwhile.

"I find it rather refreshing to listen to some of the less highly polished performances of competent orchestras, directed by enthusiastic leaders, such as we acquire from the smaller record companies these days, than to listen perpetually to performances of big-name ensembles. I'm not deriding great artistry. I'm simply endorsing the performance of music by the many rather than the few."

This provocative contention incited some argument, but in the end most were in agreement with the speaker.

The smaller companies today are turning to European radio for a great many performances, especially operatic ones. Anyone who has played around with short-wave knows that European radio sponsors consistently operatic productions, generally in their entirety. It should not be assumed that the peoples in the various countries of Europe are more appreciative of this sort of thing than the people of America, for such is not the case. Over there, this sort of thing is possible because European radio is not dominated by commercialism like our own. Therefore the so-called better musical programs abound; and not just broadcast from records but from live performances. Many of these are, of course, prepared especially for radio or wireless, and sometimes works that have not been heard in concert halls or opera houses are revived for the airways. Fortunate are those who have been able to tune-in on the B.B.C. Third Programs, for they have been rewarded by some wonderful performances, the like of which have not been heard in recent years in concert hall or theater, or elsewhere on the air. Take the performances which Beecham gave last year of Berlioz's *Les Troyens*, or his more recent venture — Strauss' *Ariadne*. Both of these broadcast series were re-broadcast in this country over local New York stations, WNYC and WQXR, but the quality of the broadcasts was inferior to the original B.B.C. one. Whether or not such performances have been heard elsewhere in the U.S.A., via local stations, we cannot say.

No Cooperation

What has long annoyed a lot of people, in and out of musical circles has been the lack of cooperation between radio stations and record companies. You might reason that one of the big record companies would grasp the opportunity to obtain performances like the Beecham *Les Troyens* or *Ariadne*. Back in the 1930s when NBC had some of the finest musical programs on the air, like the chamber music ones from the Library of Congress, Frank Black's Sinfonietta, and various lieder recitals by fine artists, it was hoped, nay expected, that Victor (NBC's affiliate), would perpetuate some of these performances on records. They did, in the case of Black's Sinfonietta at the insistence of this magazine, but the recordings Victor produced were

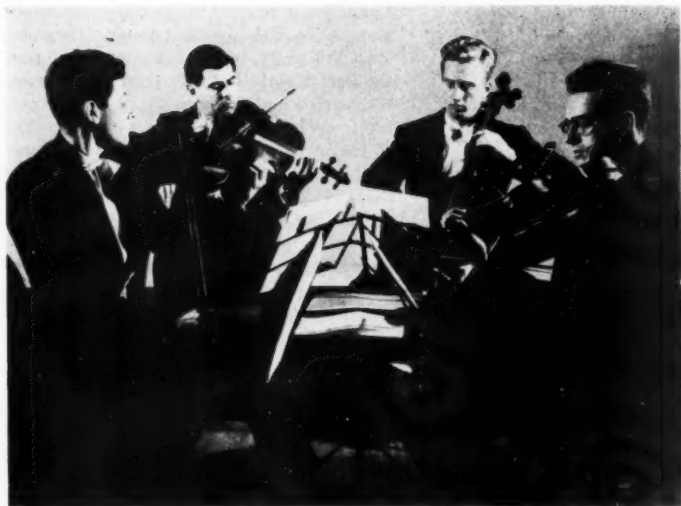
not of equal quality to the radio broadcasts. Parenthetically, the same thing can be said of Victor's 8-H recordings by Toscanini, the recording quality was not comparable in tone and balance to the maestro's broadcast ones. Evidently recording and radio engineers do not see eye to eye.

One of the most worthy series of musical programs in recent years was the new defunct *Invitation to Music*, sponsored by CBS. It was conceived and ardently worked for by one of the most adventuresome musicians in America, Bernard Herrmann, whose insatiable interest in music buried on high shelves and in dark closets prompted his bringing to light many a long forgotten score which was well worth hearing. Columbia Records had ample opportunity to acquire some unusual and estimable works from this program, but for some reason unknown to us Columbia passed them up. Countless music listeners, however, had transcriptions made of many of those programs, and probably denied themselves the purchase of many commercial record releases. Their wisdom has paid off in musical dividends which could not have been acquired from any stock in the public market.

Countless LPs to Come

If the hard-pressed record buyer thinks that the flood of good music on LP records is going to abate, in order that he may catch up in his purchases, he has another thought coming. The smaller companies have a lot of surprises up their sleeves, and the larger companies are busily preparing big-name competition. London promises us an early release of a complete performance of Johann Strauss' *Die Fledermaus*, recorded in Vienna the birthplace of this popular opera. No sooner does London let the cat out of the bag (see our January issue) than Victor and Columbia get busy behind the scenes and plan performances of their own. The cast for Columbia's proposed recording has not been divulged to us, but Victor's has. Victor aims to bring forth one of its "highlight" series — a presentation of music from *Die Fledermaus* in an English translation. The artists will be Patricia Munsel, Rise Stevens, James Melton, Jan Peerce, Robert Merrill, with

—(Continued on page 48)



The Juilliard String Quartet, Robert Mann, 1st violin; Robert Koff, 2nd violin; Raphael Hillyer, viola; Arthur Winograd, cello.

BELA BARTOK (1881-1945)

HIS MUSIC AND THE RECORDINGS

By Sidney Finkelstein

Part II

The 1920s inaugurate a new period for Bartok. The emotional content of his music becomes lighter, as though a cloud had lifted. The musical textures, however, become more original and fantastic. Any resemblance to the classical past of music seems to be abandoned, though classical forms still serve as architectural girder-work. The surface sound suggests a folk artist improvising freely, using a wide variety of strumming and percussive effects, glissandos and tone clusters.

The *First Sonata for Violin and Piano* (1921) is constructed on grand lines in all three movements. There is an opening of dramatic contrasts, followed by a meditative slow movement, and lastly a brilliantly contrapuntal rondo. Regarding Menuhin's playing in this, as well as other works, I find it technically secure, full of enthusiasm for the music, but

embodying too many of the performer's own emotionalisms. These are expressed in heavy vibrato, an occasionally strident attack, and the inability to relax. It is admirable to show enthusiasm, but at the expense of poise or repose on occasion such keyed-up vehemence tends to exhaust the listener. The piano part of this sonata, played by Adolph Baller, is weak and a definite handicap to the violinist. Yet, until a better performance comes along, the recording is worth having (Victor set 1286 or LP, LM-1009).

By contrast, Tossy Spivakovsky and Artur Balsam present, in the *Second Violin Sonata* (1922), what I would term one of the most perfect recorded performances of Bartok. There is an amazing sensitivity to every change in rhythm and timbre by these two artists. The composition is a lovely one with a slow opening movement, that suggests a tender meditation in which the fingers seem

to wander at will over the strings. The second movement, after "warming-up" with a slow pizzicato passage, embarks upon a fantastic set of improvisational variants of a dance figure and closes with a touching reminiscence of the first movement (Concert Hall set AA, also LP disc CHC-39).

The *Piano Sonata* (1926) is Bartok's only work in this form. (There is, however, a bright, folksy little *Sonatina*—1915 that pianists should find attractive.) Its three movements vary in style. First, there is a stunning exercise in bouncing rhythms, an *Allegro Barbaro* style, never mechanistic but human in its feeling and movement. The slow section is contrapuntal in Bartok's most economical manner. Lastly, there is a sprightly and tuneful rondo with an almost childlike laughter, like the *Three Rondos on Folk Tunes*. Andor Foldes, who performs the sonata on records (Vox LP disc PLP-6620), is the ideal Bartok pianist.

The *First Rhapsody for Violin and Orchestra* (1928) is a delightful throwback to the tuneful Hungarian rhapsodic style. Its recorded performance by Szigeti and Bartok, in an arrangement for violin and piano, should please everyone (Columbia disc 11410-D).

Quartet No. 3

The *Third String Quartet* (1927) is the shortest of Bartok's six works in this form. It achieves the same transformation in the style of writing for its medium that the above mentioned sonatas do for the mediums of the piano and violin. Every element in the music—such as the themes, the polyphony which often gravitates around a single tonal axis, the rhythms, the percussive sounds—derives from Bartok's folk music studies rather than from anything in classic quartet writing. Even the form may be analyzed as that of the Hungarian Rhapsody with its climax a furiously whirling dance, although the music is here very complex in texture with finely-worked-out thematic repetition and development. There are two recorded performances, one by the New Music Quartet (Bartok Recording Studios LP disc BRS-001, coupled with Stravinsky's *Five Pieces for String Quartet* and arrangements for string quartet by Serly of five *Mikrokosmos* pieces) and the other by the Juilliard Quartet (Columbia LP disc ML-4279, coupled with Bartok's *Fourth String Quartet*). A comparison of the two per-

formances brings out the special qualities and personality of the Juilliard group. They play most brilliantly, with a full understanding of the Bartok style, but they tend to understate the lyricism and to accent the timbre effects—what may be called the angular characteristics of the music. Thus, they make the music sound, so to speak, more "modern." In this work, I prefer the New Music Quartet. Though not quite as polished an organization, this group brings out better the folkish and songful qualities. The Juilliard performance is nevertheless a fine one, and certainly the record has a much better coupling. Quartet No. 4.

Quartet No. 4

The *Fourth String Quartet* (1928) is in five movements, symmetrically arranged around a central slow section. This opus is the most extreme of Bartok's studies in the quartet form, and not as emotionally compelling as the other quartets. After its harsh, percussive opening movement, its dominating mood is one of whimsical humor. Even the slow movement is an airy, recitative-like fantasy. Here, the Juilliard Quartet turns in a first-rate performance (Columbia LP disc ML-4279), which I like even better than the fine reading by the Guilet Quartet (Concert Hall LP disc CHC-9).

The *Second Piano Concerto* (1930-31) is a rich and splendid composition in the driving Bach-concerto style. The first movement is mainly the unfolding of a single germinating theme, the first five notes of the major scale, moving along with unstoppable power and with a brilliant display of contrapuntal fireworks—cannon, inversion, stretto and similar devices. The rhythmic patterns, full of vitality, offer constant surprises. The orchestra is broken down into various choirs, including the percussion. Each is flung against the piano in a contest of sound, with a stunning climax for brass. The slow movement is of great beauty, starting with a tender dialogue between the piano and the strings, and then moving into a touching "night music" mood. (Is the ghost of the slow movement of Beethoven's *Fourth Piano Concerto* discernable here?) The finale is in jolly, folk style. Andor Foldes is superb in this work, as he is in the *Piano Sonata*, and Eugene Bigot competently leads the Lamoureux Orchestra in the accompaniment. The recording is clear (Vox LP disc PLP-6620, coupled with *Piano Sonata*).

These works of the 1920s and early '30s

make an interesting contrast to the production of other composers in the same period. Stravinsky was moving, at this time, to his rather sedate, refined and thin neo-classicism, and Schonberg was developing the formalism of the twelve-tone system. On the surface Bartok's works would seem to be but another expression of the "experimental" '20s, bristling with percussiveness. But this is not true. What sets Bartok's work apart from the others is the joy in life that pervades them, and the fact that — while most other composers were moving towards a great atomization of music and a flight from the existing world — Bartok was moving towards a recapture of classic architecture (not to be confused with the imitation of 18th-century dances called "neo-classicism").

From the middle 1930s on, Bartok seemed to enter a new period. He was then in his fifties with apparently a new slant on life. After handling the concert world gingerly for 30 years, he began to blossom out in a series of grandly conceived major compositions. He preserved the originality of style of the works of the 1920s but made his new music sound less brahly iconoclastic. This music possessed a greater dramatic breadth and a wealth of singing melodic lines and passages in classical tonality.

Quartet No. 5

The *Fifth String Quartet* (1934) is still very startling in its handling of the four string timbres. In its five-movement, symmetrical structure, it seems to be modeled after the *Fourth Quartet*, but with two slow movements where the *Fourth* had two scherzos. It is a rich work which repays the study it requires. The opening allegro contrasts percussive-chord passages with lyrical polyphonic ones. It is followed by a beautiful "night music" movement (*Adagio molto*). Then comes an airy scherzo. Next is an *Andante* with a whimsical beginning and a passionate outburst at its climax. The finale is a driving contrapuntal *Allegro vivace*. I have always regarded the recorded performance of this work by the Hungarian Quartet (H.M.V. discs DB-9389/92) as one of the greatest of Bartok readings on records. The Juilliard quartet version, however, is a worthy match, and in addition a money-saving one (Columbia LP disc ML-4280, coupled with the *Sixth Quartet*). It is only in the two slow movements that the Hungarian ensemble with its

greater breadth excels the Juilliard players

The *Music for Strings, Percussion and Celeste* (1936) is one of Bartok's loveliest and most approachable major works. It is written for 22 strings which are broken up into kaleidoscopic combinations of *solis* and *tutti*, with the percussion hinting at a modern version of the baroque bass. The first movement is a slow fugue, with a grand rhythmically climactic development and a poignant close. There follows a brilliant contrapuntal scherzo that makes use of pizzicato effects. The third movement is one of Bartok's most delightful "night music" fantasies. Lastly comes a folk dance, which ends with a recapitulation of themes from the earlier movements. The performance of this opus, by a group of Hollywood musicians under the leadership of Harold Byrns, is most sensitive, and the recording is extraordinarily good (Capitol 10" LP disc L-8048).

The *Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussions* (1937) is a worthy companion piece, though very different in mood and style. Bartok's piano works tend to be more abstract in form, less lyrical than those written for strings. This work may be described as the culmination of all his piano writing, seemingly conceived for a gigantic, single instrument, capable of different registrations — the latter, of course, supplied by the use of drums, bells and xylophone. A tender slow introduction is followed by a monumental sonata *Allegro*. Then comes a nocturne-like slow movement, with a display of fireworks at its center. Lastly, there is a boisterous and deliberately lumbering folk dance, which is developed fugally and ends with a set of witty dialogues — first between the two pianists and then between piano and drums. There is a recording of this opus by Bartok and his wife, which Bartok collectors will enjoy because of the many inimitable pianistic touches. However, the music suffers badly from the poor reproduction, which was derived from a radio broadcast (Vox LP disc LP-6010). The young pianists, William Masselos and Maro Ajemian, with Saul Goodman and Abraham Marcus at the percussion, interpret the work splendidly and the crystalline-clear recording brings out every nuance of the musical timbres (Dial LP disc No. 1). Another recording, by the Italian pianists, Forini and Lorenzi, I have not heard (Durium, 3 78 rpm discs, 101-03).

Bartok's *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra* (1937-38) is one of his longest compositions. It begins with a rich movement which is, I would say, the culmination of his writing for the violin. Though it is constructed according to the most rigid principles of thematic economy, the sound is freely rhapsodic, opening with slow, czardas-like measures over a strumming harp and then moving through alternately meditative and orgiastic dance passages. Throughout the movement, there is never the relaxation to the ear of a single repetition, for a repeated phrase is always given some fanciful variation, in the manner of a folk violinist who never plays the same thing in exactly the same way. The slow movement, in variation form, is tender rather than profound, and the finale is a rondo in which ideas from the first movement return. Menuhin handles its many difficulties with complete mastery, and Dorati, who leads the Dallas Orchestra in its accompaniment, has the right feeling for the music. Though a praiseworthy release, considering the fine quality of the recording, I cannot help but feel that more rehearsals might have given the performance more of the necessary chamber-music delicacy (Victor 78 rpm set 1120).

Contrasts, for piano, violin and clarinet (1938), was inspired by Bartok's admiration for the jazz playing of Benny Goodman. It is a witty and dissonant Hungarian rhapsody, but not a deep work. The performance by Bartok, Szigeti and Goodman could hardly be bettered, although its recorded sound — like that of Bartok's *Mikrokosmos* album, is not the best (Columbia set X-178).

The *Divertimento for String Orchestra* (1939) is almost traditional in its handling of string tone. If not the deepest in content, it is a most enjoyable opus in three movements — rollicking, lyrical, and fugal — a sort of adaptation of the 18th-century *Concerto grosso* to the modern idiom. It was probably a preparatory work for the great *Concerto for Orchestra*. Tibor Serly conducts a string ensemble in an excellent and well-recorded performance (Bartok Studio LP disc 005).

Quartet No. 6

The *Sixth String Quartet* (1940) is deeply introspective, and like all of the composer's quartets a major opus. A slow, poignant *mesto*, heard at first on the solo viola, introductions in turn three sprightly and comic move-

ments, marked *Vivace*, *Marcia*, and *Burlesca*, and then flowers into a serene and exalted closing movement. There are four recorded performances, making a choice difficult. The Erling Bloch Quartet offers the most polished and tonally beautiful playing (H.M.V. discs DB20104-06). The Gertler Quartet gets more dramatic qualities from the music, and is better recorded (English Decca set EDA-73). The Juilliard Quartet gives a satisfactory reading with its customary technical brilliance (Columbia LP disc ML-1280). I have not heard the version by the Hungarian Quartet (H.M.V. discs DB9389-92) but have faith in its excellence.

While on the subject of the Bartok Quartets, I would like to say Columbia deserves praise for its venture which gives us six uniformly recorded performances in the most desirable manner on long-playing discs. In view of the fact, however, that the music needs comprehensive and elucidating notes which would deal succinctly with each work, it must be noted that Columbia has failed its prospective purchasers with the notes provided on the envelopes of the discs. Columbia has chosen to quote Milton Babbitt, a composer and musical scholar, who uses a seriously intended but incomprehensible jargon made up from an attempt to find some verbal equivalent of every technical device of musical composition. Not only does such writing about music serve no educative purpose, but it does an injustice to Bartok inasmuch as it makes it seem his creative work was only a matter of raising and solving technical puzzles. It would not have been so bad if Mr. Babbitt was quoted only on one record cover, though even then the purchaser would be stymied for elucidating analyses of the works contained therein. What the purchaser actually gets is the same futile notes on all three covers. It is rather unfair to let down Bartok in this matter, to say nothing of the Juilliard Quartet.

A lapse in Bartok's creative output after 1940 ended with the appearance of his crowning achievement, the *Concerto for Orchestra* (1943). The only hint of a concerto in the music is the fact that the brass and woodwinds play important independent roles — a far freer adaption of the old *Concerto grosso* style than in the *Divertimento*. The composition truly deserves the title of a symphony for its dramatic breadth and heroic proclamations. A slow introduction, irresistibly mov-

ing; recalls the anguish of the First World War works. This is followed by a fine sonata-form movement, with brilliant fugal passages. The second movement is a whimsical, folkish scherzo, and the third is again an outpouring of anguish, with opening and closing "night music" sections. The fourth is an uproarious burlesque, and the finale is a dazzling rondo like a *furiant*, with fugal passages. There are two recordings, either one of which can make the listener happy. One is by Fritz Reiner leading the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra (Columbia LP disc ML 4102 or 78 rpm set 793) and the other is by Eduard Van Beinum leading the Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orchestra (London LP disc LLP-5 or 78 rpm set EDA-105). I prefer Reiner's performance, because of the greater dramatic intensity and humor that he extracts from the music. But Van Beinum's has a more polished and beautiful orchestral sound, due undoubtedly to better recording conditions. There is another recording by Koradi, leading the Budapest Philharmonic Orchestra (Ultraphon discs 19050-05) which I have not heard.

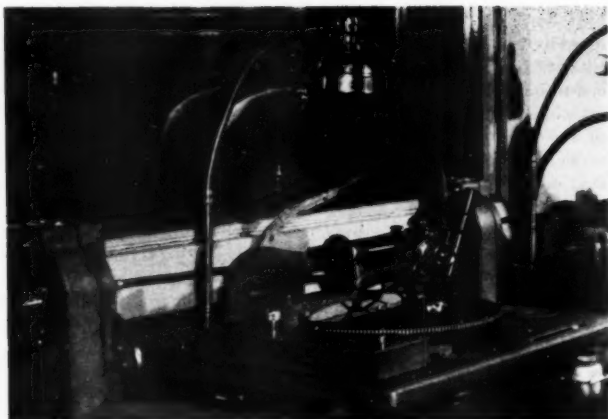
The *Sonata for Solo Violin* (1943) opens with a chaconne in which, typical of Bartok, highly dissonant opening measures gradually melt into a beautiful and poignant close. A fugue follows, developed in capricious and ornamental style. The slow movement is an ingratiating *melodia*, and the final rondo is a brilliant *presto*, with alternating passages for muted strings. The work was commissioned by Menuhin, who performs it with fine technical command and impassioned — perhaps too impassioned — style (Victor set).

The *Third Piano Concerto* was one of those scores on which Bartok was working during his last painful illness. Tibor Serly, his close and intimate friend, supplied the orchestration of the last measures after Bartok's death. The sprightly, opening movement, built on a clangorous Hungarian theme, and the driving contrapuntal finale, serve as a setting for one of Bartok's wonderful slow movements, built on a chorale-like theme over which the piano weaves mellow figures. The performance of Georgy Sandor, a pupil of Bartok's, and Eugene Ormandy, leading the Philadelphia Orchestra, has the requisite strength, but not all the requisite delicacy. The LP reproduction has better resonance than the original shellac issue (Columbia LP disc ML-4239 or 78 rpm set 671).

A *Concerto for Viola and Orchestra* was also left by Bartok with the orchestration sketched out in shorthand. Serly completed the work from Bartok's notes and it was recently performed in concert. A recording is in preparation by the Bartok Studios.

Bartok was one of the consummate musical craftsmen of the 20th century, but what gives his music its greatness is his own eminence as a human being. Those who knew him say that the essential honesty of the man was irrefutable. One had but to look at him, said one writer, to know he would not abide "compromise, untruth or pretense." His shyness, so often publicized in his lifetime, was, as Friede F. Rothe has said, no outward defense, "but rather the expression of a great gentleness and an inward preoccupation." Bartok was a high-principled and painstaking worker.

For a single Bartok work in a record collection, I would suggest the *Concerto for Orchestra*. However, a minimum library that would give some knowledge and scope of Bartok's musical richness would have to include at least a dozen works. I would suggest, in addition to the *Concerto for Orchestra*, the *Music for Strings, Percussion and Celeste*, which might be called a little chamber symphony. Columbia has made it easy to own all the quartets, which are splendid works. If a selection must be made, I would recommend the *Second and Fifth Quartets*. Of the folk music collections and shorter compositions, the *Hungarian Folk Songs* are essential. To these I would add the *Forty-four Violin Duets*, as an example — a most beautiful one — of a complete Bartok collection, and also the 10" LP disc on which Bartok plays his *Allegro Barbaro; Suite, Op. 14; Burlesque and Roumanian Dance*. Of his major piano works, I would suggest first of all the LP disc containing Foldes' fine performances of the *Second Piano Concerto* and the *Piano Sonata*, and also add the *Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion* as played by Ajemian and Masselos. Of the violin works, I suggest Spivakovsky and Balsam's reading of the *Second Sonata*. But it is characteristic of Bartok's work that each composition represents a different problem, solved and put away. No work repeats another. And so this listing, to one familiar with the music of this extraordinary man, must bring to mind memories of the unique and beautiful music not included.



Recording lathe with instrument for checking depth of cut of record grooves.

Technical Progress

In the Modern Record

By T. R. Kennedy, Jr.

(Associate Radio Editor, *The New York Times*)

ALTHOUGH ONE SHOULD NOT EXPECT to hear music from a phonograph record comparable in quality to the original tonal sounds from which it was created, we can come closer today to that ideal than the average person is aware. Almost daily during the past several years, new ideas born in the laboratories and elsewhere have greatly reduced the non-realistic gap between the recording studio's microphone and the home loudspeaker.

Technical progress has been greatest since the advent of the microgroove disc; greater, in fact, than during the entire prior history of the recording art. When played over today's best reproducing equipment, amidst a comparable array of favorable acoustics, the modern LP disc leaves little to be desired in the way of realism.

In 1945 the LP, which sparked this upsurge of development, was but a theoretical concept in the brain of an engineer. A year later, it had reached the stage where it could be privately demonstrated. Today, however,

LPs are being produced by no less than 27 concerns and issued on more than 50 separate labels.

Much, indeed has come to pass since the heyday of the old 78 rpm discs, and more is on the way. Progress, so say competent authorities, "has hardly begun." Enchanting idea, isn't it?

More than mechanical and electrical perfection, however, is needed before music sounds like it should. This often-missing or highly deficient link in the chain is *adequate acoustical conditions in the home*, a highly complex and difficult problem. It can generally be resolved, however, if the music listener has both patience and pocketbook to see the matter far enough to match his desire for realistic musical quality.

Some of the new developments now brightening the lot of the discophile were discovered quite by accident. Others came as the result of long hours spent in planned research.

One of the novel ideas of this modern era of the phonograph record — of distinct ad-

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vantage in microgroove recording — is the "heated" stylus. It should be explained that the stylus is the almost microscopic "point" sapphire that "cuts" or plows out the wavering spiral needle groove on the face of the "original master" disc, as it turns at the correct speed on the recording lathe. The playing needle rides in this groove on the ultimately finished pressing to reproduce the recorded sound.

When the cut is about to begin, or perhaps just afterward — depending upon the technique employed by the recording engineer in charge — the sapphire is heated to a temperature of several hundred degrees, Fahrenheit, by passing an electric current through an almost equally microscopic coil of wire wound around the base of the sapphire point. A point that is slightly warm does its job a bit easier than a cold point; a point that is quite warm, or moderately hot, cuts better than a slightly warm one, and so on. The best "heat," it seems, has yet to be accurately determined; but there is no doubt that heating is very beneficial because it produces a finished pressing almost as good as if the original master had been a "wax" rather than the much-harder-to-cut acetate plate. Heating the recording point greatly reduces the work of the cutting head and point as electrical "wiggles" or patterns of the original music or voice tones are traced on the master.

This new process might be likened to a hot knife cutting through butter. It literally melts its way through.

A High Gloss to Groove Walls

Obviously, this imparts a high gloss to the side walls of the grooves; especially at the critical small groove diameters near the disc's center. This gloss is readily transferred to the pressing — the final product which reaches the public. This results in a much quieter "background." In other words, the disc has a greater freedom from needle scratch noise. Also of the utmost importance is the fact that the smoother the groove the less abrasion between groove and playing needle. The disc lasts longer.

But one of the most important advantages is that cutting points can be made sharp when intended for the heated process, and this makes it possible for the sapphire to cut higher frequencies at the innermost grooves of the currently-popular acetate master recordings.

The result is a nearly equal tonal range — both in frequency and tonal level — throughout the disc.

Before going farther, it should be explained that most sapphire cutters for normal recording on acetate masters are finished with a "dulled" edge instead of a very sharp one. The dulling process makes the cutter both cut and burnish the acetate side walls. This produces, it is true, a relatively quiet cut and freedom from "background" when the finished pressing is played; but it at the same time, makes it more difficult for the cutter to transcribe the very highest frequencies in the groove as the smaller diameters are approached.

The Old Way

Before the introduction of the heated stylus technique, many recording engineers found it desirable to resort to what is known as "variable compensation" to achieve at the inside grooves something of the quality and brilliance of tone which was easily attained at the beginning or outside diameters.

The heated stylus is now standard for the production of all Columbia "Masterworks," and is being used wholly or in part by other record manufacturers. The process was invented and brought to its present state of usefulness by William S. Bachman, Columbia Recording research engineer, and his associates. For years, however, recordists — both amateur and professional — have noted that better recordings could be made if the acetate discs were kept warm during the cutting progress — the warmer the better. Some went so far as to heat the discs in an oven just before the cut was scheduled to begin.

Sometimes master discs have to be recorded from comparatively small studios. An idea that injects sparkle and much needed resonance under such circumstances, where desirable musical qualities are somewhat lacking, is the use of the electronic "reverbatron," developed under the leadership of Dr. Peter C. Goldmark, television engineer, who has lent his technical skill to recording problems for several years and is largely responsible for the microgroove idea.

This device emphasizes the musical ranges that initially are weak and injects them back into the electrical circuit. The result often is a quality of liveness akin to real concert-hall standards.

Going a step farther, a large LP reproducer now cuts all the "masterworks," master discs from a special recording hall of adequate size and acoustic qualities, while the recording engineer listens to and judges the tonal balance from an adjoining control room having the approximate listening conditions found in the average home living room. A finished pressing which has more of the "concert-hall sound" when reproduced under home conditions is the result. After all, the ultimate judge of a recording is the consumer, who listens at home.

Too often discs cut from a concert hall are judged for tonal balance right in the concert hall, with disappointing results when the disc is given the acid home test. Concert hall and home conditions are far different, even though the basic acoustical laws apply to each.

One of the most important things about a sapphire cutter, obviously, is its shape. It should be explained that the old type records — the 78 rpm ones in particular — were made with sapphires having a rather large rounded point or "tip radius." This made what is today known as the "U-shaped" groove. With such grooves, the playing needle had to effect an almost perfect fit to assure reproduction free from rattles and distortion.

What record fancier of the old days has not had difficulty in securing the proper type of playing needle, at one time or another, to get the best possible reproduction from cherished Battistini discs, Carusos, or countless others.

The Needle Had to Fit

Unless a more or less perfect fit was found, pronounced groove destruction resulted. Records wore out more quickly than they should have. The highly abrasive material used in the old records actually wore the needle down to fit the groove in its first few turns on the turntable. Bits of metal worn from the needle were often left embedded in the grooves. The more the record was played under such circumstances, the more its destruction was accelerated.

More recent records are played with specific points, which come in the right sizes fitted into pickup cartridges. For modern 78 rpm either a point radius of .0025 or .003 are employed. In microgroove-cut discs, an .0001 is used, as needles of wider tip radius wear these grooves and because of the shallowness of the groove tend to skip.

Lately, what is known as the "V-shaped" groove has come into existence for making microgroove discs. Although not as yet in universal use, this cutter augurs well for future recordings. Pioneered by Isabel Capps and Associates of New York, the V cutter might be called the ultimate in groove geometry; because the V groove it makes accommodates playing points of several different tip radii. In other words, within the geometrical limits of the groove the smaller the tip radius the deeper the playing needle tracks in the groove; the larger the tip radius the higher it tracks. The playing point, however, should not touch the ever-so slightly rounded bottom of the V groove nor ride so high as to rest insecurely on the groove's edges, but between these limits, numerous tests have shown, perfect tracking may result. For example, the groove can be played perfectly with needle points ranging from .0002 to .0015 inch, with very little difference in quality. On the side of record wear, the use of the larger point is probably recommendable, though perfect reproduction of quality may dictate the other.

Interchangeable Stylii

Systematic use of several size points for one's recorded treasures makes them last longer, experience has shown, as wear is distributed over several areas of the groove sidewalls instead of one area.

We have already explained that when a sapphire cutter is manufactured or repointed, it is first made "sharp" and then dulled or "dubbed" to make it finish the cutting job by "burnishing" the groove. This technique is absolutely necessary for making acetate master discs. Parenthetically, as we have dwelt on the sapphire point in relation to cutting master acetate discs because the sapphire is most widely used for this purpose, it should be pointed out that the sapphire is not the most desirable playback point for home usage. The diamond not only wears longer but wears your valued records less. But this is another story.

It was ultimately discovered that when staccato sound or loud dynamics were recorded on the master the cutter had to move so rapidly sideways to do the job that the dubbed surfaces were not effective in burnishing the groove at all. Rough, noisy sidewalls resulted. A new type of point was therefore produced which had not one but three angu-

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lar burnishing facets. The result was a groove which received an adequate amount of burnishing under all ordinary conditions of musical loudness or frequency. This new point, called the "anti-noise modulation stylus," was developed jointly by Miss Capps and Emory Cook, New York recording specialists.

Well-made discs, however, would go for nothing without playing equipment of equal quality, which takes us back to our earlier assertion that the music listener needs the where-withal to match his desire for realistic musical quality. The prospective purchaser of new equipment should not decide immediately upon the first extended-range unit heard, but instead should make arrangements to listen *quietly* to several other units with others present if possible, one an audio engineer, another a musician. In some of the larger cities, there are concerns which have audio labs with facilities for switching quickly from one system to another, thus permitting desirable comparisons. The ultimate test, of course, is in the home where the proper setup must be determined for the best quality in the reproduction of today's fine discs.

Elgar's "Cello Concerto"

ELGAR: *Concerto for Violoncello and Orchestra, Op. 85; Anthony Pini* (cello) and the **London Philharmonic Orchestra** conducted by **Eduard Van Beinum**. London 10" LP disc LPS-95, \$4.95.

▲WHEN ELGAR'S *Cello Concerto* was first heard in 1919, it disappointed critics and laymen alike. His *Violin Concerto* (1910) regarded as a symphony with a boldly dominating solo violin, had made them anticipate a concerto of similar massive proportions. Instead of the expected "concert symphony" for cello and orchestra, Elgar gave his admirers "what seemed at first hearing almost a private fantasia or rhapsody," as the late Sydney Grew has said, "in which was nothing big in the way of musical idea, intellectual force, or grandiose technique."

Subsequently, critics and a small part of the public realized that the work was far more important than they had deemed it at the beginning. Its qualitative refinement was art of the chamber music order, featuring

that most intimate of all instruments — the cello. Though calling for a full symphony orchestra, Elgar's orchestration, as Tovey says, "is as unworldly as it is masterly," for it is "throughout concentrated on the special task of throwing into relief a solo instrument which normally lies below the surface of the harmony." The general form of the work is one that rises emotionally, and one might also say dramatically, through a series of three, short fantasy movements to a large and important finale. In the latter, Elgar made the "last demonstration of his musical genius and his last declaration of the faith he held" (Grew).

In the deeply meditative sections of this concerto, there is an Elgarian mood of wistfulness that repays unrestricted attention, extended acquaintance (which the LP record permits), and a willing ear. This wistfulness or shyness ("that goes with intimate moods," Tovey states), was with Elgar a sort of rare, controlled inner ecstasy. Elgar's famous, indeed "notorious *nobilmente* is now spiritual, not proud, stately, or pompous," wrote Grew twenty years ago. "Without doubt, Elgar, as man and musician, appears at every point; but all now is purified, in the manner of song, even to the echoes of Elgar the imperialist and to the visions of the man who has made the greatest social success of any serious composer known in musical history."

Prior to World War I, Elgar wrote his great Symphonic Study — *Falstaff* (1913), a score which he regarded as his best purely orchestral work. During the war, he wrote some patriotic music, but the conflict and his duties as a special constable affected his sensitive temperament and prevented his furtherance of the former *nobilmente* strain. In 1918, he turned to chamber music, composing his *Sonata in E minor* (violin and piano), his *Quartet in E minor*, and his *Piano Quintet in A minor*. The next year came his *Cello Concerto*, also in *E minor*. All these works show a chastening of mind and spirit, definitely brought on by the war. All disclose the style of the born *improvisateur* and highly skilled workmanship, but there is in them less of the free extemporization that we find in earlier compositions, even though the quartet and the concerto rate among Elgar's greatest works.

It is not uninteresting to conjecture whether or not the choice of the same minor key in three of these works was occasioned by ad-

vancing years or the result of that worldwide calamity which replaced the *nobilmente* spirit with reflective contemplation. The use of the *E minor* key suggests an absorption in a mood marked by subtle and subdued tonal coloring. One is reminded of the painter who becomes so engrossed in his color scheme for one picture that he is unable to free himself entirely from its spell and continues to use it with little variation in several other canvasses. In these works of Elgar, for all of which I have developed a certain affection, there is that quality that prompted my friend, W. R. Anderson, to say of the cello concerto, "I know of no concerto whose form is so finely molded to the end of exhaling an inward, romantic — perhaps autumnal — spirit; it is late career music, the fruit of a lifetime's experience of art." Despite the prevailing romantic spirit in its music, the concerto remains classical in an unpedantic way (H. C. Colles compared its form with one or two of the Beethoven *quasi fantasia* sonatas). The writing throughout is lucid in the realization of its free form and style. One of the great moments in modern music is the *pianissimo* section toward the end of the last movement where the cello seems to fade in a mood of strangely compassionate elevation before the final, more assertive *allegro molto* section. The inquiring listener is recommended to the knowledgeable Tovey for more detailed discussion and analysis of the work (*Essays In Musical Analysis*, Vol. III).

Four Recordings

Elgar's *Cello Concerto* has been recorded four times. With the composer, conducting the New Symphony Orchestra, Beatrice Harrison performed it in 1929 (H.M.V. discs D1507-09). Some years later, W. H. Squire played it for British Columbia, with Sir Hamilton Harty and the Hallé Orchestra (issued as domestic Columbia set 247 in June, 1936). In November 1946, Pablo Casals, with Sir Adrian Boult and the B.B.C. Symphony, recorded the work for H.M.V. (automatic discs DB9043-16). And now, Anthony Pini and Van Beinum play it. Beatrice Harrison's performance was hailed in its time "as some of the greatest cello playing yet brought into the gramophone." Squire's reading was good but less poetically compelling. Of all the conductors, Harty provided the most eloquent orchestral playing. But not until

Casals and Boult were joined in a recording, which conveyed the fullest dynamic subtleties, was this concerto heard to best advantage. Casals' playing is superb — his eloquence in energetic passages and the quiet beauty of his playing in reflective sections is most appreciable, but somehow Harrison entered into this essentially poised, English music more persuasively. Casals brings almost too great an intensity to his performance, and strangely he takes unlicensed liberties with some of its rhythms. Pini's interpretation comprises the best qualities of Harrison and Casals. There is satisfying tonal eloquence and strength without undue virtuosic intensity or overstress of sentiment in his playing. The recording balance of the solo instrument and Van Beinum's orchestral accompaniment is excellent, so too is the overall tonal quality though the dynamics are not as subtly shaded as in the Casals-Boult set. What gives Pini's performance precedence at the moment, in my estimation, is its issuance on a long-playing record, for breaking the mood of the long finale into four parts is almost fatal to its desired effect. I firmly believe that many listeners who previously have not taken to this music will, upon hearing its four movements unbroken, be completely appreciative of its manifold, reflective beauties. — P.H.R.

Editorial Notes

(Continued from page 38)

Robert Shaw and his Chorale. The conductor will be Fritz Reiner, who has recently switched from Columbia to Victor. Big names again!

Two of the most ambitious programs to be embarked upon by smaller record companies are Westminster's plan to record all the Beethoven piano sonatas played by Kurt Applebaum, and Elaine Music Shop's decision to record all the Schubert piano sonatas performed by Webster Aitken. There is a rumor that another company is being formed which will shortly sponsor recordings of all the Mozart string quartets performed by a leading American ensemble. These are laudable efforts to serve the art of music. In the

case of Westminster and Elaine, the artists in both cases — though not as widely publicized as others — are masterful musicians.

It is a foregone conclusion these days, that if you are an avid record collector, you will never save money unless you give up your enjoyment of music from recordings. As, not a few of our friends say these days, "We prefer to die poor, but richer in musical experience."

—P.H.R.

Mozart's "Harem" Singspiel

MOZART: *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*; Wilma Lipp (Konstanze), Emmy Loose (Blondchen), Walther Ludwig (Belmonte), Peter Klein (Pedrillo), Endre Koreh (Osmín), Heinz Woester (Pasha), Chorus of the Vienna State Opera and the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Josef Krips. London LP set, 3 12" discs, \$17.85.

▲WHILE *Die Entführung* does not rate with those consummate achievements, *Don Giovanni* and *Le Nozze di Figaro*, it is a most delightful operetta or *Singspiel* (as termed in Mozart's time), a form of entertainment to which Mozart gave unprecedented artistic achievement. I think it was Shaw who said that *Die Entführung* anticipated the distant music of the 19th century. Certainly many later operetta composers cast more than a casual eye on Mozart's score. Freed of the shackles of the Archbishop of Salzburg, Mozart in 1782 was, when he approached the creation of *Die Entführung*, as Eric Blom has said, "at last wholly in his element" (writing music for the theater); but "not because of any especial liking for the German *Singspiel* or even because he was himself planning any elopement of sorts, but chiefly because by 1782 he was a fully matured master of his craft and had learnt a good deal about life."

Eric Blom, in his book on Mozart, writes more succinctly and concisely than most, and what he often says in a single sentence sums up the essence of the situation so rightly that one needs to go no farther for enlightenment. Such economy of tightly drawn thoughts in words might well incite the envy of other writers. One could spill a lot of ink

to urge the uninitiated or delinquents to investigate this operetta, but need we go further than quote another pertinent Blom sentence? "It is impossible for anyone with the least musical sensibility to imagine a happier evening at a theater than one spent at a good performance of *The Elopement*."

Now really good performances of this work are rare. But even a moderately good one can provide a most pleasant evening in the theater. I can remember a performance in the spring of 1944 at the Juilliard School of Music, with Erich Kleiber conducting the orchestra, which proved that well-trained students can give pleasure in a work of this kind. This performance and one heard two years later at the Metropolitan Opera were sung in English. The Metropolitan production failed to retard memories of the Juilliard, for the stilted acting and the singing were less to be expected in that famous edifice than in a School of Music's auditorium. As a matter of fact, the young singers at the Juilliard School had a more acceptable comic style than those at the Met.

This preliminary brings us to the present recording of *Die Entführung*, accomplished by a group of artists who have been singing their various roles for a number of years at the Vienna Opera. I have in my possession a letter from a music listener — Charles Jahant — who heard this identical cast in Vienna, and what he says is substantiated by the recorded performance. "A recent production of *Il Sergallo* at the Vienna State Opera provided a gratifying evening though the singers were not by any means the most accomplished ones. Wilma Lipp, a charming young artist, has not quite the security to cope with the difficult role of Constance, and similarly Emmy Loose as Blondina lacks much-needed control. Endre Koreh, who possesses a large bass voice, was a wonderful Osmín, dominating the scenes in which he appeared. A lack of flexibility, common to most German tenors, made Walther Ludwig's Belmont a bit trying. The orchestra direction of Josef Krips was competent but not too imaginative. What the production lacked was intelligent dramatic action and a better coordination of the ensemble, to my way of thinking; but everybody seemed to be enjoying themselves and that in itself provides pleasure for the operatic fan, eager and hungry, to hear this

delightful comic opera by Mozart."

Mr. Jahant, who will contribute in the near future some valued factual material (acquired from existent printed sources in his travels throughout Europe) on famous singers of the past, sums up the performance we have offered us on records. Despite the lack of assurance on the part of the two ladies and Krips' "not too imaginative" orchestral direction — a fault I would blame in part on the recording — the production provided a pleasurable evening in which your reviewer sat back, smoked a good cigar and generally relaxed as one should do when listening to this delectable comic opera of that inimitable genius, Mozart. Whether or not a better performance will materialize in the future is a debatable question.

The recording, made in Vienna, does not measure up to the standards of London's work accomplished in England. The balance between the singers and the orchestra favors the former, which I feel may really do Krips an injustice. For the conductor begins the opera with a first-rate rendition of the overture. He, however, does not thereafter match this standard until the end of the last act, where, as though he felt a sudden urge to rally to the cause, he gives much needed gusto to Osmin's final aria and the subsequent "vaudeville" in which all the principals and chorus celebrate the magnanimity of the Pasha who releases his captive women to their desired lovers and bestows his royal blessing.

London Gramophone presents a libretto with the original German text and a good translation by Ruth and Thomas Martin. All the music, except one aria of Belmont, is heard, but superfluous dialogue has been omitted. —J.N.

LP Re-Issues

▲Voices of protest are being raised against the mating of completely dissimilar works on LP discs where musical merit is not comparable. Take the case of Lalo's fine overture to *Le Roi d'Ys*, with its distinction in style coupled to Seigmeister's far less consequential, folksy *Ozark Suite* (Columbia 10" LP disc

ML-2123). It is hard to believe that listeners liking the Lalo would be receptive to the Seigmeister. Moreover, Mitropoulos, who is the conductor in both cases, is more dramatically valid in his performance of the French music. Then take the case of Haydn's ingratiating *Imperial Symphony*, which has as its playmate, of all things, Liszt's *Les Preludes* (Victor LP disc LM-1073). The conductorial skill of Stokowski is involved in both instances, but listener admiration for this cannot fail to be divided. To be sure, there is a reason for these incongruous couplings, a monetary one, inasmuch as it assures one conductor royalties from both sides of a record.

The mating of Haydn's "*Lark*" Quartet and Mozart's *D minor* (Victor LP disc LMO1076) is justified, not alone from the fact that the Hungarian Quartet is heard in both, but because Haydn and Mozart are far more compatible bedfellows than Haydn and Liszt. To our ears, Victor has done the best job in reproduction for these works on its LP issue. The contrast between Schumann's *Fantaisiestücke* and Beethoven's *Pathétique Sonata* (Victor LP disc LM-1072) is a better one, and Rubinstein is at his best in both works. The tonal quality of these recordings is especially rewarding — a very natural reproduction of that perverse instrument on LP — the piano.

One of Victor's finest orchestral jobs this past year — a performance of *Four Dance Episodes* from Copland's *Rodeo* by the Dallas Symphony Orchestra directed by Antal Dorati has been excellently transferred to LP (10" disc LM-32). On the face of the evidence of unused space on this record, one would imagine a single 12" side would have been the best bet; it would have saved a break in the music.

Brailowsky's performances of the *Waltzes* (Nos. 1 to 14) of Chopin — formerly a 78 rpm set — have been successfully transferred to LP (Victor 12" LM-1082). Piano tone is good, but the artist's rather lukewarm interpretations are not in the true Chopin tradition.

The LP re-issue of Stokowski's performance of the Brahms *First Symphony* (12" LM-1070), accomplished with the Hollywood Bowl Symphony Orchestra, is so infinitely better

(Continued on page 70)

Record Notes and Reviews

THERE IS IN SOULS a sympathy with sounds, ~ and as the mind is pitched the ear is pleased ~ with melting airs, or martial, brisk, or grave, some chord in unison with what we hear ~ is touched within us and the heart replies ~

Orchestra

BEETHOVEN: *Symphony No. 5 in C minor*, Op. 67; Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orchestra conducted by Willem Mengelberg. Capitol LP disc P8110, \$4.85.

▲A LONG TIME AGO, one of America's best critics, the late H. T. Parker of the *Boston Evening Transcript*, wrote about Willem Mengelberg and his performance of this symphony: "Mr. Mengelberg is a conductor who seeks large and emphatic effect out of whatever music he undertakes, who relies upon sharp contrasts, who spends little pains upon exposition and the refinements of expression, who is insensible to the middle gradients of power. Being so minded, he hoists the finale of Beethoven's *Fifth Symphony* for example, from plane to plane of excited jubilation, holding the music and the orchestra momentarily suspended in his Jove-like fist for some gentler and contrasting measure. Being so minded, he also takes the slow movement of the same symphony with a robustness that does violence to its imaginative and capricious quality and that instantly coarsens it. In similar fashion, the gentler, the feminine melody as it were, of the first allegro hardly finds its voice. No sooner does it appear than Mr. Mengelberg sends the first masculine melody crashing down on its head, even though the music so loses all quality of contrast."

Mr. Parker wrote these words all of three decades ago. Since then, Mr. Mengelberg has probably played this symphony countless times, but his interpretation has varied very

little. The *Fifth*, to him, remains a drama of emphatic contrasts, in which his masculine prowess is asserted in no uncertain terms. His conductorial skill is supreme but his flare for melodrama is questionable. I simply cannot go along with him in this case, and admitting the Jove-like fist is not remiss in this symphony the desire to hear it more effectively applied would take me back to the Toscanini reading where contrasts are more equitably applied, though the recording is far less pleasing to the ear. Or again, to Walter's recent performance which makes the music far less overwhelming and more human. —P.H.R.

MOZART: *Sinfonia Concertante in E Flat, K.Anh. 9, for Oboe, Clarinet, Horn, and Bassoon with Orchestra*; *Wind Group of the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra and the Chamber Orchestra of the Vienna State Opera* conducted by Henry Swoboda. *Divertimento No. 3 in B Flat, K.Anh. 229*; **Franz Bartosek and Leopold Wlach** (clarinets) and **Karl Oehlberger** (bassoon). Westminster LP WL50-20, \$5.95.

▲ALTHOUGH the score of the *Sinfonia Concertante in E Flat, K.Anh. 9*, was found and played as early as 1922, it is, strangely enough, not well known today. A lovely hybrid work — part concerto, part symphony — it is cast in three-movement form and comprises (1) an *Allegro* which deftly contrasts passages of proclamative force with those of quiet lyricism; (2) an *Adagio* shot through with a distinctive poetic pathos; and (3) a charming, jolly *Andante con Variazione* with a concluding *Allegro* in which the four soloists are brilliantly displayed. It is a pleasure to have this work available again (the Stokowski version in Victor set 760 has been out of

print for some time) in such a lifelike recording. Swoboda's sometimes stolid conducting has the redeeming qualities of energy and spirit; and the wind soloists are, with the exception of the adequate oboist, superb.

The *Third Divertimento in B Flat, K. Anh. 229*, is one of a series of five written around 1783 for the musicians who frequently gathered at the home of Mozart's friend, Gottfried von Jacquin. It is moderately entertaining music, if it is heard in the sort of elegant and vital performance that can be found on this disc.

—C.J.L.

GILLIS: *Symphony 5½* and *The Alamo; The New Symphony Orchestra* conducted by Don Gillis. London 10" LP LPS-177, \$4.95.

GILLIS: *Saga of a Prairie School (Symphony No. 7); Don Gillis* and same orchestra. London 10" LP LPS-195, \$4.95.

GILLIS: *The Man Who Invented Music; Jack Kilty* (narrator); and *Portrait of a Frontier Town; Don Gillis* conducting same orchestra. London LP 12" LLP 176, \$5.95.

▲YOU MIGHT CALL Don Gillis, the peoples' composer, for he aims to celebrate the reactions of the people in music. Gillis has his theories about "Music for Fun," which he has proceeded to put on paper. But he casts a serious eye on things also and writes music which, I suspect, has an appeal for the majority.

Gillis in his serious moods has a homespun sentiment which only misses greatness by the lack of more profound urge. You might classify, if you must classify, this truly, indigenous American composer as the musical Chamber of Commerce life-saver. *The Saga of a Prairie School* puts Fort Worth, Texas, on the map in a way no municipal prepared advertising ever could do. And his tone poem, *The Alamo*, might very well incite a lot of folks to visit that historic place better than any prepared tourist literature. Though I cannot subscribe to any very "deep feelings" in this music, it has honest emotional qualities and well-disposed sentiment.

Symphony 5½ is almost too well known to require extended comment, having been successfully programed by Toscanini and Arthur Fiedler. Its title is dictated by the fact that this spontaneous opus intruded itself

halfway between the composition of Gillis' fifth and sixth symphonies. It is subtitled "A Symphony for Fun" and this it is. Its four movements are entitled Perpetual Emotion, Spiritual, Scherzofrenia, and Conclusion. Whether rightfully called a symphony or not, this work *is* fun. It bubbles over with life, healthy energy and a contagious spontaneity of expression. I would not predict its durability, for this is a personal reaction. The few times I have heard it have left me friendly disposed towards its healthy exhilaration.

Most of Gillis' music is motivated by a program which is never faked or misapplied. The four movements of *Saga of a Prairie School*, written at the request of Texas Christian University as part of the program celebrating the diamond jubilee anniversary of Fort Worth, may be played without pause; but from the titles of each section one can easily comprehend the outlined program. It has an earnest sentiment and an overall good will which will keep it alive.

The only work, so far recorded, which does not appeal to me is *The Man Who Invented Music*. It is a narrated bed-time story with music which may be over the heads of the kiddies and beneath the heads of the parents. It is one of those "tall" tales, recited by a grandfather trying to put his young granddaughter to sleep. I would not say that there is not an audience, perhaps an eager one, for this work; but I do not think I shall try to establish that audience. Let others do it.

As for the performance of these works, they are all efficient, apparently well rehearsed. The recordings are excellent.

—P.H.R.

HAYDN: *Symphony No. 83 in G minor (La Poule); and Symphony No. 84 in E Flat; Orchestra Collegium Musicum, Vienna*, conducted by Anton Heiller. Haydn Society LP disc HSLP-1015, \$5.95.

▲THE HAYDN SOCIETY gave us recently a performance of *La Reine Symphony (No. 85)*, perhaps the best known of Haydn's so-called Paris symphonies. Neither of the present works have quite the same distinguishing profiles, though No. 83 has an opening movement of serious purpose in which are found some lovely melodic effects. However, the slow movement and Minuet are

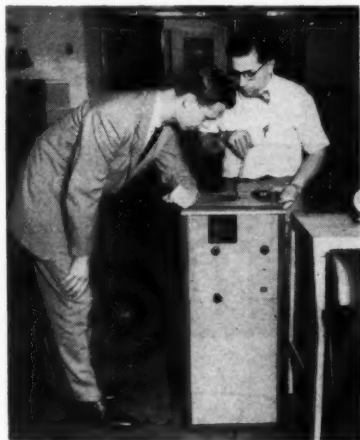
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by no means immediately engaging, nor does the worth of the finale register on first hearing. This, I think, is due to the conductor, who fails to substantiate the dramatic quality of the slow movement and the energy of the finale. Heiller's conducting is clean, smooth and admirable from a musicianly aspect, but it is an almost too "gentle" approach to the robust Haydn. Jonathan Sternberg, who conducted most of the Society's earlier issues of the symphonies had less refinement but more impulsiveness and vitality.

No. 84 has an interesting opening movement, a variation slow section with well-shaped ideas and a dashing finale, in which "its sudden changes from the pianissimo of a few instruments to the forte of the whole orchestra anticipate the famous 'Surprise' of *Symphony No. 94*" (Geiringer). This is a work one would like to study and know with the aid of a score, which is non-existent at the moment. Good recording in both symphonies and quiet surfaces. —P.H.R.

RAVEL: *Daphnis et Chloé Suites Nos. 1 and 2*; and **SCHOENBERG:** *Verklärte Nacht*. The Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Eugene Ormandy (with the Temple University Chorus directed by Elaine Brown in *Daphnis et Chloé Suite No. 1*). Columbia LP ML-4316, \$4.85.

▲IF Eugene Ormandy's rhythm keeps his interpretation of *Daphnis et Chloé* from being as splendidly evocative as Monteux's rendition of No. 1 or the Koussevitzky and Munch versions of No. 2, there can nevertheless be nothing but admiration for his blending and balancing, his attention to detail, and the general execution of his players. The inclusion of the seldom-performed *Interlude* in *Suite No. 1* was a happy thought.

The real news concerning this disc, however, is Ormandy and the Philadelphians' performance of Schönberg's early, long-winded, diffuse, imaginative, expressive *Verklärte Nacht*. To my way of thinking, this is the dream rendering of our time. The piece is a perfect vehicle for the most delicate and powerful string section of our day and one that profits from the best points of Ormandy's technique, training, and instinct.

The recordings given both of these works is deserving of the highest praise. They are among the precious few that have come close

to capturing the sound of the Philadelphia Orchestra in a good hall. —C.J.L.

ROUSSEL: *Symphony No. 4 in A major, Op. 53*; and *Suite in F major, Op. 33*; **Lamoureux Orchestra**, Paris, conducted by **Georges Tzipane**. Capitol LP disc P-8105, \$4.85.

▲THE ART AND FINE TOUCH long characteristic of French tradition are happily illustrated in this music, and also the composer's striking gift for shimmering sonorities. Jean-Aubry, that most evocative writer on French music, once said of Roussel: "His work is created in his own image. It reflects him as the most faithful mirror, with his love of life without loudness, his restrained but lively ardor, his exquisite sense of pleasure, a thousand refinements without affectation, and, beneath this delicacy and this smiling nature, a gentle and firm power, with occasional melancholy. . . The art of this musician is that of the landscape painter." Jean-Aubry might have been writing about this symphony, though at the time he penned those lines this opus had not been written.

Those who know and admire Roussel's *Symphony No. 3 in G minor*, in which there are often daring but repellent harmonic features, will find this work more chastened and less astringent. But the fearless consistence of Roussel's personality with its youthful freshness, its strength and boldness, and its spontaneity is apparent from the opening notes to the final ones. The music is strongly bucolic, suggesting the composer's love of nature and his responses to its universal rhythms and various aspects of light. The opening *Allegro* has vigor, a sense of healthy well-being; the songful *Andante* a masculine tenderness without a hint of melancholy. The *Scherzo*, which the premiere French audience demanded played again, is piquant and zestful, and the *Finale* conveys a distinctive incandescence, buoyancy, and grace.

The *Suite in F* is an old favorite. It was written in 1927, eight years before the symphony, and first programmed by Koussevitzky to whom it is dedicated. The form is classical — Prelude, Sarabande, Gigue — and into this mold, Roussel applies his use of polytonality — the counterpoint of keys as well as melodic lines — giving a modern character to music which is as refreshing as it is provocative.

The performances of these works are vital and full of true Gallic enthusiasm, and the recording is quite satisfactory. The composer's analysis of this work is given in the admirable notes which accompany this disc.

—P.H.R.

SIBELIUS: *Symphony No. 2 in D major*; **Stockholm Symphony Society Orchestra** conducted by **Tor Mann**. Capitol-Telefunken 12" LP disc P-8107, price \$4.85.

▲FOR A SYMPHONY as popular as this one has been on American concert programs, there are reasonably few recorded versions listed and only one other on LP. This newly released disc is preferable to the Ormandy—Philadelphia LP (Columbia ML-4131). Ormandy's temperament in my estimation, is unsuited to this sort of music. During the course of his attempt to fit the score to his predisposed conception, many loose ends in the orchestral web unravel.

I was brought up on the Koussevitzky set (Victor 272), with its ominous pauses, weighty ritards and general atmosphere of impending doom. Tor Mann does not go in for much of this treatment. In general he keeps to a slightly faster tempo than average and permits whatever cosmic implications this score may have to dissipate themselves without comment. I think I prefer it that way. For the record, this score has also been played by Beecham (Victor set 1334), not available as yet on LP.

The Stockholm Orchestra's solo players know how to produce the correct impersonal phrasing and tone for Sibelius. The ensemble has been well drilled and adequately reproduced. All in all, this is probably the most straightforward reading on records and unquestionably the best on LP. —A.W.P.

STRAUSS: *Don Juan*; and *Till Eulenspiegel's Merry Pranks*; **Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra** conducted by **Clemens Krauss**. London 12" LP disc LLP-233, price \$5.95.

▲LAST MONTH we had a *Till Eulenspiegel* by the same orchestra and the same con-

ductor on Capitol-Telefunken (LP disc P-8100), which is, to say the least, an odd state of affairs. So far as I am able to tell, these are two different performances, not even made with identical solo players. I can not be absolutely sure, as much of my regular equipment is still in a dismantled state, the result of a recent shift of quarters.

In any case, the interpretations are, as one might expect, practically identical, the big difference being in the far superior recording technique of the London engineers. In matters of balance, identifications of instrumental timbres and general clarity they are far in front of their competitors, whose disc, by ordinary standards, was pronounced quite satisfactory when reviewed last month.

Krauss' *Don Juan* is a well fed, solid fellow. The Viennese conductor does not obtain the transparency and limpid clarity of the old, out-of-date Fritz Busch reading (Victor set 351) nor the excitement of the current Pittsburgh — Reiner effort (Columbia LP ML-2079), yet it is a good, middle-of-the road conception which should certainly be your choice if outstanding reproduction is an important consideration. I was able to hear practically every note in the score. —A.W.P.

SUPPE: *Overtures—Boccaccio, Pique Dame, Poel and Peasant*; **Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra** conducted by **Hans Schmidt-Isserstedt**; *Jolly Fellows, Jolly Robbers*; same orchestra conducted by **Leo Borckhard**; and *Light Cavalry*; same orchestra conducted by **Erich Kleiber**. Capitol LP disc P8108, \$4.85.

▲FRANZ VON SUPPE (1820-1895) had a successful career as an operetta composer in Vienna from 1847 to his death. Of the many operettas which he wrote, only a couple have been successfully reproduced outside of Austria and Germany; the majority today are known only by their overtures. Most of these on the present record have been available on 78 rpm discs every bit as well played as here and also as well recorded. How many listeners can stand or withstand an onslaught of von Suppe's mildly diverting curtain raisers to forgotten operettas remains a moot question. But for those who favor this type of program, Capitol has done a competent job and so too have the several conductors engaged in the proceedings. —P.G.

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Concerto

HAYDN: *Cembalo Concerto in G major*; Erna Heiller with Orchestra Collegium Musicum, Vienna, conducted by Anton Heiller; and *Violin Concerto in G major*; Edith Bertschinger with same orchestra and conductor. Haydn Society LP disc HSLP-1014, \$5.95.

▲THESE are earlier works of Haydn suggesting workaday motivation. The *Cembalo Concerto*, presented with two harpsichords — one the soloist, the other with the accompanying orchestra, has its charming moments. Geiringer mentions heroic defiance in its first movement which is not evident in the present performance. Its pensive slow section is more arresting and very well played. The whole performance is smoothly and efficiently contrived but the conductor lacks essential vehemence to my way of thinking.

The *Violin Concerto* has far less adventure-some writing for the solo instrument than is found in the most likable *C major Concerto*. It provides no real problems for the soloist who is a capable artist. This work, which seems to harken back to Bach and others, has a most appealing slow section. Good recording though the balance favors the solo instruments in both works. Heiller is apparently a conscientious musician who knows exactly what expressive results he wants and knows how to get them. I suspect these performances will grow on one with repeated hearings. —P.H.R.

Chamber Music

DVOŘÁK: *String Quintet in G major, Op. 77*; Vienna Concert House Quintet. Westminster LP disc WL-50-26, \$5.95.

DVOŘÁK: *Piano Quintet in A major, Op. 81*; Chigi Quintet. London LP disc LLP-202, \$5.95.

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strings, as Nicolas Slonimsky says in his notes. It was written in 1875 and labelled by the composer as his *Opus 18*, but Dvorak's publisher, Simrock, gave it a later opus number when he issued it in 1888. The work won its composer a prize from the Society of Artists in Prague, in 1875, but thereafter seems to have been forgotten. Though an advance on the chamber work which preceded it, especially in its handling of form, the quintet while certainly free from harmonic barrenness is lacking in convincing thematic contrasts. The opening movement and the finale do not sustain the same interest found in the scherzo and the slow movement.

The operatic spirit of the opening movement inclines Alec Robertson to think that these movements "transcribed for orchestra would serve excellently as operatic overtures." The scoring of the quintet for string quartet and double-bass serves to give weight to the music but fails in supplying needed contrast in color to heighten interest in the secondary themes of the outer movements. On the other hand, the scherzo and *Poco Andante* are appealing, though they are more heavy-handed than in the later chamber works. I rather suspect that Dvorak was overawed with the friendship of Brahms and trying to penetrate the latter's German orbit, for there is none of the Czech nationalism in this work which later gave character and lyrical charm to Dvorak's music. The performance of this work is excellently handled by a first-rate group of Viennese musicians, who have a healthy vitality in their playing. The recording is excellent.

Opus 81 is one of the gems of existing piano quintets. It belongs in every record library beside the similar works of Schubert, Schumann and Brahms. This is music which sprang from the true Czech soul of its composer, irresistible in its rich stream of ever-flowing melody, its bucolic lyrical expression. Dvorak has used the Slavic song form, *Dumka*, with its changes of mood from melancholy to brightness, as his slow movement, and that "whirling and enraptured" Czech dance pattern, the *Furiant*, as his finale. The perfection of this chamber work makes words futile, for ears were made to absorb its ever delightful sounds and memory to retain them.

The Chigi Quintet is certainly one of the smoothest groups of its kind performing today. The fine balance of the ensemble is matched by the players' expressive feeling. They perform with tonal warmth and spontaneity if not always with the fullest intensity that the music asks. The recording is truly lovely in sound. —P.H.R.

MENDELSSOHN: *Two Concert Pieces for Clarinet, Bass Horn and Piano, Op. 113 & 114*; and **SCHUMANN:** *Marchenerzählungen for Piano, Clarinet and Violin, Op. 132*; **Leopold Wlach** (clarinet), **Franz Bartosek** (Basset Horn), **Erich Weiss** (viola), **Jörg Demus** (piano). Westminster 12" LP disc WL50-21. Price \$5.95.

▲THE MAIN INTEREST in this disc will be, I imagine, as an example of solo use of the basset horn. We have heard this instrument, which is in reality the tenor member of the clarinet family, in Mozart's *Masonic Funeral Music*, quite prominently in his *Requiem* and in *The Magic Flute*. Beethoven is said to have used it once, but since the classic period its popularity has waned to the point of extinction, so much so that the average conductor permits basset horn parts to be played by bass clarinets, or, in some cases, by English horns.

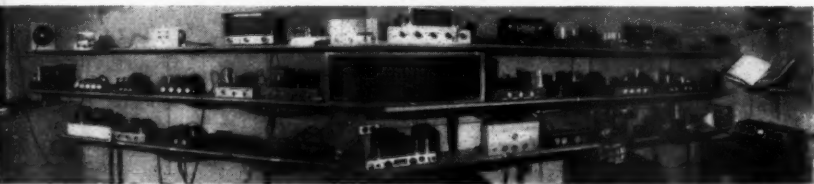
The two Mendelssohn pieces have their value in demonstrating the capacities of the instrument. As one might expect, they are elegantly turned out, having been prepared for the use of Baermann, the famous clarinet virtuoso, and his son.

In spite of the energetic and determined efforts of the program annotator to sell us on this score, I can find little that is entertaining or moving in the Schumann piece. The work is not well written for clarinet, the composer either being ignorant or indifferent concerning certain of its inherent characteristics. Furthermore, I think that the idea of combining clarinet with viola is fundamentally unsound, as the tonal colorings of the two are so similar.

Leopold Wlach is a first-rate player, but lacks any particular solo personality. The best clarinetist I have heard recently on records was Buerkner of the Munich Orchestra, who recorded the delightful *Weber Quintet* (Polydor PL-6140). —A.W.P.



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MOZART: *Quartet No. 14 in G, K.387*; and *Quartet No. 18 in A Major, K.464*. The **Calvet String Quartet**. Capitol-Telefunken LP P-8106, \$4.85.

▲TWO of the brightest jewels from the treasure chest of Mozart's chamber works are here given vital treatment by that admirable pre-war quartet, the Calvet. Both of these works are among the great six that Mozart wrote as a tribute to Haydn, and both are cast in the somewhat unusual four movement form of an Allegro, a Minuet (for the second section), an Andante, and a Finale (Allegro).

I have heard the Calvet Quartet play with more refinement in ensemble passages than it exhibits here, but I have rarely heard any quartet play a Mozart work with the splendid verve and delicacy as can be found on this disc. A word should also be said about the unusually lovely blending of tone color that it achieves.

The recording of K.464 is acceptable by today's standards, but the K.387 is subpar. Surfaces are gritty on both sides of this disc.

—C.J.L.

MOZART: *Quartet for Oboe and Strings in F, K.370*; **Hans Kamesch** (oboe), **Anton Kamper** (violin), **Erich Weiss** (viola), **Franz Kwarda** (cello). *Divertimento No. 2 in B Flat, K.Anh. 229*; **Leopold Wlach** and **Franz Bartosek** (clarinets) and **Karl Oehlberger** (bassoon). *Quartet for Flute and Strings in D, K.285*; **Hans Reenicek** (flute), **Anton Kamper**, **Erich Weiss**, and **Franz Kwarda**. Westminster LP WL50-22, \$5.95.

▲BOTH of the quartet performances listed above are good and simple. Everyone involved observes the musical amenities and displays sound workmanship without personal insistence. This sort of playing is always welcome, especially when there is (as is the case with the *Flute Quartet in D*) no other available recording. This work, by the way, has a fine first movement; an appealing, truncated second movement; and a diverting finale.

The *Oboe Quartet in F* (with its heavenly slow movement which alone would make it one of the most significant of Mozart's chamber works) is a different story. Try as I may, I cannot forget the magic of the rather ancient Goossens-Lener Quartet version (Columbia set X-21). There was in Goossens' performance a variety of nuance and of expressive coloration

that by comparison makes Kamesch's work appear that of a talented amateur.

The *Second Divertimento in B Flat, K.Anh. 229* is pleasant hackwork that Mozart ground out for some of the Jacquins parties. The fine performances of Wlach, Bartosek, and Oehlberger tend to make the piece sound a little better than it is. Superb recording helps the illusion, too. Indeed, Westminster's engineering for all of these works (in fact all of their releases that I have heard in the past two months) seem of the highest quality.

—C.J.L.

MOZART: *Serenade No. 11 in E flat, K.375*; and *Serenade No. 12 in C minor, K.388* for 2 Oboes, 2 Clarinets, 2 Bassoons and 2 Horns; **Wind Group of the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra**. Westminster 12" LP disc WL50-21, price \$5.95.

▲EVEN VIOLINISTS would agree, I believe, that this is a fine record, one that should be heard and acquired by all, no matter what their predilections. Any one with any doubt in his mind as to the expressive power of a small group of wind instruments expertly handled by composer and performers can have those reservations expunged without delay.

The *E flat Serenade* is the better known. It has been performed in concert in New York by several groups in recent years, a notable reading being that of Ignace Strassfogel with an octet of instrumentalists under the aegis of the New Friends of Music. It was originally scored as a sextet, a pair of oboes being added a year later (in 1782) to conform with the instrumentation of Prince Liechtenstein's ensemble.

The Vienna style of playing as displayed here is very similar to what one might expect to hear from a superior New York ensemble—that is to say, rather thin oboes, fat liquid clarinets, clear resonant bassoons and heavy sometimes tubby horns. Concerted into an expertly rehearsed ensemble, yet without the Prussian drillmaster correctness affected by some of the German orchestras, most agreeable results are attained.

There have been recordings of these pieces by the Oubradous and Hewitt groups which are scarcely worthy of serious consideration because the style of playing employed is entirely foreign to the requirements of the scores. To obtain an excellent comparison

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between the French and the Viennese wind styles, however, for educational purposes, one could play first the Hewitt then the present disc. What a revelation! —A.W.P.

SCHUBERT: *Quintet in A major (The Trout), Op. 114; Vienna Concert House Quintet (Anton Kamper, violin; Erich Weiss, viola; Franz Kwarda, cello; Josef Hermann, double-bass; Paul Badura-Skorda, piano).* Westminster LP disc WL-50-25, \$5.95. The same work; *Budapest String Quartet Members (J. Roismann, violin; B. Kroyt, viola; M. Schneider, cello), Georges Moleux double-bass; Mieczyslaw Horszowski, piano.* Columbia LP disc ML-4317, \$4.85.

▲ON THE FACE OF IT, the artists who would be expected to shine are those listed on the Columbia disc. Too, judging from the notes, which inform us that this recording was made in the Coolidge Auditorium, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C., and that the string instruments used (with the exception of the double-bass) were from the Whittall collection of rare instruments, one would expect the tonal qualities of this recording to be unsurpassable. But such is not the case. Somehow, these rare old instruments seem a bit too mellow in sound for the greater good of Schubert's music. The musical proficiency of the ensemble is above cavil, but the richness in maturity of the interpretative artistry does not make Schubert's youthfully ardent music live in the manner which I, for one, wish to have it live.

The Viennese ensemble are all young players and the spirit of youth prevails in their performance. But it is the pianist, Badura-Skorda, who gives the vital spirit to the interpretation. I am told (and not by the record sponsor) that this pianist is regarded as one of the coming top-ranking artists in Europe. To my way of thinking, a wider fame may be accorded him, but from the disposition of his performance on this record he has arrived and is deserving of wide appreciation.

Horszowski does not begin to make of the piano part what Schubert intended it to be. One returns to the Franz Rupp—Stross Quartet recording (Capitol) to hear a truer Schubertian sanguinity. Horszowski follows

the style of playing which Schnabel pursued, meticulous but lacking in essential vitality. As for the string players in the Viennese group, they are all excellent musicians who evidence an active affection for the music. The balance of ensemble in the Budapest-Horszowski performance may be finer, but it is this very element of artistic achievement which leaves their emotional projection less persuasive. I think Roismann, the first violinist, the worse offender; his meticulous playing lacks essential sparkle.

The recording in both versions is excellent, but there is an overall brightness in the Westminster with its extraordinarily realistic piano projection which sets it out in front. You may return to the Rupp performance with its gracious lyricism, but once you have heard the more vividly recorded version of the Viennese players you may well find it taking precedence in your affection. As one of my associates said on hearing this record, "It makes one fall in love with the music all over again."

A warning should be sounded against a mutilated version of this work put out by Remington. —P.H.H.

SCHUMANN: *Sonata in A minor, Op. 105;* adn **DVORAK:** *Four Romantic Pieces, Op. 75;* **Louis Kaufman** (violin) and **Artur Balsam** (piano). Capitol 10" LP disc L8112, \$3.85.

▲NEITHER of Schumann's violin and piano sonatas represent him at his best; both show the expression of a brooding and restless melancholy brought on by the beginning of his fatal illness. Yet, there are sufficient evidences of his musical powers in the *A minor* to incite appreciation, and the work is "full of subtle details of workmanship." One of the finest things that Busch and Serkin did for the phonograph was their performance of this sonata (former Victor set 551 — issued June, 1939). Kaufman and Balsam give an equally fine performance, expressive and free from emotional excesses. The recording, of course, is considerably better than the older one and an LP besides.

It seems strange to find Kaufman playing the *Four Romantic Pieces* of Dvorak. Not that he fails to do justice to these sentimental cameos by the simple, heart-feeling Czech, but because the violinist has of late associated

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himself with more rewarding music. Moreover, recently we had performances of these pieces by Peter Rybar (Westminster disc 50-15) with a better chosen disc companion, the composer's *Sonata in F major*. It is doubtful that anyone interested in the Schumann will welcome the Dvorak, though Kaufman and his capable partner tastefully play these sonful pieces. —P.H.R.

Keyboard

BACH: *Passacaglia and Fugue in C Minor*; *Chorale: Herzlich tut mich verlangen*; *Toccatina and Fugue in D Minor*. **Fritz Heitmann** (organ). Capitol-Telefunken 10" LP L-8105, \$3.85.

▲**FRITZ HEITMANN** is one of the great musical artists of our day. His profound scholarship, his excellent musical mind, his technical equipment, and his imaginative registrations are ever in evidence and ever a delight.

If this disc does not quite measure up to his famous performance of Bach's *A German Organ Mass* (Capitol-Telefunken LP P-8029,) it is primarily the fault of ancient recording, noisy surfaces, and a few exaggerations in nuancing of pace and of right-hand rubato by Heitmann.

All of the music on this disc is justly celebrated and revered. I dare say that this is due as much to orchestral transcriptions of these works as anything else. So be it; it's not half bad preparation for the real thing.

—C.J.L.

CHOPIN: *Ballades*; **Robert Casadesus** (piano). Columbia 10" LP ML-2137, \$3.85.

▲**THIS EXCELLENT RECORDING** of Chopin's four great ballades should give a deal of comfort to those musicians and laymen who admire the strong poetry that is in these works and that issues from faithful interpretations of them. It should also serve as an eye-opener to those who, having heard Chopin's compositions played only with distortions of rhythm and pacing in the traditional way, think the ballades weak and sentimental.

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In his general overhauling of these works, Casadesus has apparently restudied the original scores and taken into consideration the composer's letters which deal with matters of tempo, rhythm, and phraseology. His research has paid off handsomely and has enabled him to scrub the grease from those mirrors of life and beauty so long obscured by the mannerisms of many pianists.

There are undoubtedly some listeners who will wish for a bit more expressive warmth here and there, but I cannot imagine anyone's failing to appreciate the grandeur and sweep of Casadesus' playing or his revelation of the inherent strength in these works. Such musical and intellectual values are regrettably all too rare.

—C.J.L.

PIANO MUSIC OF FAURE: *Theme and Variations in C sharp minor, Op. 73; Barcarolle No. 1 in A minor, Op. 26; Nocturne No. 4 in E flat, Op. 36; Kathleen Long* (piano). London 10-inch LP disc LPS-260, \$4.95.

▲FAURE is a composer who is beginning to come into his own. One of the most sensitive French musicians of the 19th and 20th centuries (his life span extended from 1845-1924), he was a creator and teacher who had a powerful influence on the French school — more, even, than Franck. Possibly the greatest French song composer of his period, he also wrote operas, some symphonic and chamber music and a good amount of piano music. The latter has always delighted connoisseurs. It is gracious and graceful in a neo-Chopinistic way, in perfect taste, subtle in line and harmony, frequently haunting in melodic content.

The three works on this disc are among his best. Mature, reflective, gentle music, yet highly sophisticated in treatment, they grow on one with repeated hearings. It would be ungrateful to over-analyze Miss Long's playing of them, as she is so obviously devoted an interpreter. Suffice it to say that she is an honest pianist, has the notes well in hand, and plays with the utmost sincerity. She also has the benefit of the best modern recording. There was an old (c. 1940) Columbia recording of the *Theme and Variations*, however, by Carmen Guilbert, that had a more aristocratic approach, in addition to a more flexible pianistic one.

—H.C.S.

PROKOFIEFF: *Sonata No. 6, Op. 82; Visions Fugitives, Op. 22; Leonard Pennario* (piano). Capitol LP disc P-8113, \$4.85.

▲IN THE CONCERT HALL nowadays, the Prokofieff third and seventh sonatas are the ones that get the biggest play. Once in a while the eighth comes up, and now and then the sixth which is here played. None of them really improves on acquaintance. At first one is impressed with the rhythmic strength and ingenious piano treatment, but the law of diminishing return quickly sets in. The melodic content of the sonatas is not particularly distinguished, and all seem to be built on the same formula. Once one becomes familiar with that formula there is little left.

There is, however, the pleasure of hearing a pianist sweep expertly through some very difficult writing, and on that account Pennario acquits himself well. He is a young pianist with a modern outlook; his tone is a little percussive, his rhythmic sense keenly developed, his fingers accurate, his approach objective. Little more could be asked.

In the *Visions Fugitives*, however, some of which Prokofieff himself recorded for Victor in 1938, a little more color might have been forthcoming. These vignettes are among the most attractive things in the Prokofieff canon. Pennario plays them straightforwardly enough, but without the whimsy and diablerie that Prokofieff himself — a superb pianist — brought to them.

The recording is very good, virtually flawless and faithful to the sound of the instrument.

—H.C.S.

Voice

BRUCKNER: *Te Deum; Stefanie Holachovsky* (soprano), *Fanny Elsta* (alto), *Lorenz Fehenberger* (tenor), *Georg Hann* (bass), with the *Chorus and Orchestra of the 1949 Salzburg Festival* conducted by *Joseph Messner*. Festival 10" LP 101, \$4.75.

▲WHEN Bruckner was in his last illness and feared that he would be unable to finish his *Ninth Symphony*, he told his friends that he wished the *Te Deum* (that dated from 1883

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to serve as its finale. Shortly after the composer's death, the *Te Deum* was seldom heard except in that capacity. In recent years, however, it has usually been played as a separate work and the *Ninth Symphony* has been generally allowed to stand as an unfinished composition.

There have always been mixed feelings about the *Te Deum*, just as there have been about the rest of Bruckner's output; but in the case of this work the reasons are different. There is scarcely the pretentious inflation of musical thought or the loose organization in the *Te Deum* that mars so many long stretches of Bruckner's symphonies. But on the other hand, there are not in your reviewer's opinion as many memorable moments as can be found in either the flawed *Eighth* or *Ninth* Symphonies.

The *Te Deum*, here recorded for the first time, loses a good deal of the power it possesses by rather poor microphone placement. The chorus sounds blocks away and the soloists appear much too close. The orchestra, which plays in a barely acceptable manner under Messner's leadership, seems under-sized. I like the singing of Hann and Elsta, think Holeschovsky adequate, but rather dislike the timbre of Fehenberger's voice.

—C.J.L.

CHINESE SONGS: *All the Red River; Separated by the Yangtze River; Song of the hoe; The red bean love-seed; By the Chia-Ling River; How can I not think of her; Drinking song (from The lady of the Camellias); Song of the great wall.* Yi-Kwei Sze (bass-baritone) and Nancy Lee Sze (piano). Concert Hall 10" LP disc CHC 48, \$3.85.

▲THE WRITER of the notes accompanying this disc devotes three paragraphs to the subject of Chinese music. "The present recording," he concludes, "contains both traditional songs of a folk and ballad style, and modern art songs which show the influence of Western music. . .," adding, and quite rightly, that "the music is as easy to listen to as a Schubert lied or an American ballad." After the learned build-up, the listener is likely to be a bit confused.

Most of us are still prone to think of all Orientals as primitive peoples, largely because we have never come to understand them. It is true that culturally as well as geographically they have always occupied the other

side of the world, and that their music and art in the pure state are far removed from ours. But the fact is generally overlooked that the interchange of commerce and travel have carried many of our ideas and expressions to Japan and China, with the result that there exists music which, while still strange to our ears, has come very strongly under our influence. In the world of records we know that one of the great markets for all the best in our musical repertoire has been Japan, and it is quite safe to say that the peoples of the East have absorbed more of our art than we have of theirs. Some old-time collectors will remember the series of Japanese song records made for Victor by the tenor Yoshie Fujiwara, whose training was Italian and whose accompaniment was the European piano. Something similar has happened on this record.

Mr. Sze's voice suggests a Russian quality: indeed, according to the liner notes, it has been compared with that of Chaliapin, and the analogy is not inapt. It would be difficult for the uninitiated to guess at the language or the national style of the songs, but they do seem to approach the Slavic. The melodies

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are haunting, the musical variety is considerable, and the singing is robust and healthy but by no means unpoetic. What scholarly interest the songs have (if the program annotator will permit me) is for the student of influences: the chief value of the disc is in its direct appeal.

The recorded balance is unusually good, though the reproduction of the voice is rather brilliant, and benefits by some cutting down on the highs. I am grateful to the annotator for the full translations. —P.L.M.

DEBUSSY: *Clair de lune; Fantoches; Romance; Nuit d'étoiles; Mandoline; Il pleure dans mon cœur; Green; Voici que le printemps; Rondel chinois; Pierrot; Apparition.* Lily Pons (soprano) and Frank La Forge (piano). Columbia 10" LP disc, ML 2135, \$3.85.

▲THE SPECIAL VALUE of this recital is in the fact that it presents three little known and previously unrecorded songs. One of them, indeed, has not been published. It would be overstating the case to say that *Rondel chinois* (the unpublished one) is either particularly characteristic or that it, *Pierrot* or *Apparition* is especially important; yet they are interesting and welcome, for every Debussy song throws just so much more light on the total of his output. The *Rondel* gives Miss Pons her best chance at vocal display in the works of this composer; *Pierrot* is built around the old familiar tune *Au clair de la lune*; *Apparition* is a mood picture, more substantial and closer to the better known songs.

Of the others *Green* and *Mandoline* were included in one of Miss Pons' Victor albums (M-599) reviewed in these pages November 1939. With the exception of *Nuit d'étoiles* (Debussy's first published song) the rest have done several times over. I have expressed the opinion before that this soprano may have missed her true *métier*. Although she has somehow built and maintained a popular reputation as the world's foremost florid singer, her *coloratura* has never been of the smoothest or most dazzling. Even the runs in the little *Rondel* here included are fluttery and aspirated. On the other hand her voice at its best has a genuine lyric quality, a tonal roundness not usually associated with singers of her type. She is by nature musical and

her phrasing is generally admirable. If she had developed the habit of communication the art of playing with her words and coloring them, she would be a first-rate singer of songs. She came closer to doing this in her earlier *Green* and *Mandoline*. To compare her *Clair de lune* with Maggie Teyte's, her *Nuit d'étoiles* with the historic acoustic of Julia Culp, or her *Voici que le printemps* with that of Povel Frijs or Emilio de Gogorza, is to regret the artist she might have been. Unfortunately too, Mr. La Forge's piano playing is heavy, unsubtle and blurred by an overuse of pedal. On the whole the voice itself is in good shape and well recorded.

Once again we might wish the annotator had studied the texts of the songs. All he has to say of *Rondel chinois* is that "as one would expect, its mood is oriental," and of *Pierrot*, "Here Debussy and the poet de Banville evoke the traditional figure of pantomime Pierrot." —P.L.M.

PUCCINI: *La Tosca* — Love Duel (Act I) and *Vissi d'arte* (Act II); Ljuba Welitch (soprano) with Richard Tucker (tenor) in the duet, and the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra conducted by Max Rudolf; **STRAUSS, Johann:** *Die Fledermaus*—Czardas, *Der Zigeunerbaron*—Habel ach; Ljuba Welitch with same orchestra, and **WEBER:** *Der Freischütz* — Agathe's Gebet; Ljuba Welitch with the Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by Walter Susskind. Columbia 10" disc ML-2139, \$3.85.

▲HERE is singing in the grand tradition. Miss Welitch's vocal line is smooth and ingratiating. In the music from *Tosca*, the quality of her voice recalls the tonal beauty of Geraldine Farrar and the dramatic vibrancy of Claudio Muzio. Tucker's Cavaradossi has advanced in tonal quality and artistic excellence since I last hear him in the opera house.

Miss Welitch's performances of the highly difficult *Czardas* and *Gypsy Song* from the Strauss operas are tonally radiant and emotionally exciting. It is doubtful that any other soprano of today can similarly cope with these arias matching her gleaming tonal radiance.

Her rendition of Agatha's *Prayer*, a re-issue, illustrates also her ability to color tones, but it does not retard memories of others. Her singing lacks essential poise in the sustained first section, and is almost too careful in the

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final *Allegro*. There is not always the same feeling of firm breath control that one finds in the other selections on this disc. But, as Mr. Miller previously said, it "is interesting singing all the way through."

As fine as the recording is in the *Freischütz* aria (accomplished in England) I think domestic Columbia has given us the best recorded sound of Welitch's voice to date on records. While the orchestral accompaniments are satisfactory as sound, Mr. Rudolf's direction is no more than competent; and in the Strauss except it is the soprano who sets the pace and properly accentuates the rhythms.

—J.N.

VOICE OF THE XTABAY: Yma Sumac (soprano), with Orchestra conducted by Leslie Baxter. Capitol 10" LP disc H244, \$2.85.

▲THE NOTES on the wrapper read like a page from some credulous child's land of magic—actually they come from Hollywood and suggest the deftest technicolor technique. The first paragraph reads: "When you play the records in this album, prepare for an exotic musical experience—a voyage into a new land of sound. For you have never in your life heard anyone sing like Yma Sumac." Then comes some cullings from the press—all of which tell you that the lady has a fabulous voice. If you keep on reading, you'll learn that the singer is a Peruvian wonder child, born in a village situated 16,000 feet high in the Andes, who possesses a voice with a range of four octaves. Further, that she sings songs "from her own Inca background." Immediately, you may think of Erna Sack, and if you are intrigued with the latter's flights into alt you may hasten to listen to what the "Voice of Xtabay" ("the most elusive of all women") sounds like.

Let it be said, hers is a phenomenal voice of extraordinary clarity and accuracy. She hits every note in the middle whether down in her contralto range or high up in her soprano range. The highest note I could ascertain for certain was F above high C, but it may be she sings higher when there is the need or urge to do so. I would say in the present selections she traverses three octaves, which is phenomenal enough considering she runs the gamut at will with the utmost ease and certainty. The exotic selections, she



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sings, have all passed through the arranger's mill, and to us convey the Hollywood glamour touch. Their folk qualities have been touched up by a broad color brush, whether for the good I cannot say. Miss Sumac's voice fascinates, but the music she sings seems too much alike and its meaning is not clarified. It would be interesting to hear this unusually gifted coloratura in more familiar music; she might prove the coloratura of the century. At the present time, Miss Sumac definitely makes Erna Sack seem a novice at the game of jumping from low C to high C with her amazing expertness and a surety of pitch. She's a natural for romantic tales of long ago in the movies, whether she can act or not. Maybe she should be cast as "the bird who became a woman," as her own people are supposed to have called her.

—J.N.

★ **STRAUSS:** *Elektra* (complete opera sung in German); **Anny Konetzni** (*Elektra*), **Martha Mödl** (*Klytemnestra*), **Daniza Ilitsch** (*Chrysothemis*), **Franz Klarwein** (*Aegisthus*), **Hans Braun** (*Orestes*), etc., **Orchestra and Chorus of the May Music Festival, Florence, Italy, Dimitri Mitropoulos, conductor.** Cetra-Soria LP set, 2 12" discs, \$11.90.

▲ THIS SET arrived at the last minute and only a cursory hearing has been possible. One of the most exciting things last season was Mitropoulos' performance of this opera in concert. One suspects, if artists' commitments had permitted, that performance would have been recorded by one of the major companies. One of the highlights of this year's May Festival at Florence was also Mitropoulos' performance of *Elektra*. Said one Italian friend of ours: "There was a high degree of communicative intensity between the participants and the audience. It was the most exciting performance at the festival." One can believe it after hearing this recording; and how wise Cetra has been to retain the applause of the audience at the end, "it preserves the excitement of the living performance."

Mitropoulos' conducting of this Strauss score is a brilliant theatrical evocation. Without hesitation, I would rate it as the finest thing he has accomplished to date for the phonograph. The lurid force of this musical

drama, its terrific orchestral welter, demands a "personality" conductor with a flair for dramatic intensity, as much as it demands a singer with equal attainments for the role of *Elektra*. Said one Italian critic: "Volcanic direction for music that is volcanic!" Extravagant words, and yet not without provocation — for Mitropoulos is sensational. He always has been sensational in the big works of Strauss, for they permit him to show what a superb orchestral technician he is. The singers seem efficient in their roles, but more on this later. Konetzni, who sang at the Metropolitan during the season of 1934-35, has lost none of her ability to handle the vocal difficulties of a taxing role. Her artistry has matured and one feels her characterization must have been an impressive one.

The recording, made originally on tape, is sonorously realistic though slightly uneven in quality. Sides two and three are noticeably better than sides one and four. However, this unevenness of quality does not retard one's appreciation of the performance or, for that matter, of the reproduction considered in its entirety. —P.H.R.

✂ **PERGOLES!** *La Serca Padrona* (Opera Buffa); **Angelica Tuccari** (soprano) as *Serpina*, **Sesto Bruscantini** (basso) as *Uberto*, **Orchestra of Radio Italiano** conducted by **Alfredo Simonetto.** Cetra-Soria LP disc 50,036, \$5.95.

▲ PERGOLES!'S "merry masterpiece" has long been in the operatic repertoire (since 1733). On the stage, it never fails to appeal to audiences especially when presented as a forerunner to a more serious opera. Its story "derives its effect from two comedy elements which have ever been popular with audiences of all periods: the cleverness of the low-born whose wit triumphs over the simple-minded men of rank, and the ever-popular motive of the mummery" (Geiringer). The maidservant of an elderly bachelor has designs on him and determines to awaken his jealousy. She gets the servant *Vespone* (a mute in the plot) to disguise himself as a marine captain who is eager for her hand in marriage. *Uberto* rages, while *Serpina* coaxes and scorns. In the end, the old bachelor proposes marriage and the little maid becomes mistress.

In a recording the role of the mute can hardly be fully appreciated in its relation to the

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plot. Too, despite the ingenuity of the singers' characterizations, the element of acting plays a strong part in the comedy. In other words, *La Serva Padrona* needs to be seen as well as heard. There is plenty of spirit in the present performance. Bruscantini, who portrayed the apothecary in Cetra's recording of Donizetti's *Il Campanella* is a first-rate basso-buffo, and his presentation of the role of the morose old bachelor is believable and entertaining. The despotic Serpina is entrusted to an Italian soprano with a white, acidulous voice, who fails to convey successfully the different moods of the character — now conjoining, now threatening. Some vocal charm is needed to make this character believable and appealing. It might be noted that Signorina Tuccari is an improvement over the razor-edged soprano who sings the same role in the Vox recording of this opera and a decidedly more efficient artist. In fact, the Cetra performance is a more lively and engaging projection of the opera and a far better recording. —J.N.

Record Miscellany

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▲THE ASSUMPTION that there cannot be a very large audience for such LP issues as these, as some more serious-minded music listeners contend, is not borne out by sales figures. If there were less richly rewarding musical offerings on LP records these days, many who spurn releases like these might be more friendly disposed, for they are fine examples of the work of various recording engineers.

Neither Kirsten nor Stevens, who transferred their positions from Victor to Columbia and vice versa, are heard at their best in their latest offerings. The former, a fine operatic artist, does aameleon act and becomes a female Sinatra, while the latter offers far less appreciable vocal artistry in operetta than she has in opera. The case of Miss Pons is one that always creates debates. Her style doesn't vary from one selection to another, only her vocal line and that not always for the good of things. Her projection of text leaves much to be desired. Here, she is best in her lyrical offerings.

Kostelanetz pursues his familiar pattern in the music of Irving Berlin. Exaggerations in instrumental timbres abound, but Mr. Berlin evidently approves for he is pictured with the conductor on the cover of the disc.

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Mr. Eddy may impress a lot of folks with his linguistic abilities, but his singing is rather tame. Everything sounds alike, if you know what we mean.

Jessica Dragonette's religious program is obviously addressed to Catholics. Her clear, pure soprano voice is faithfully recorded.

Mr. Peerce sings six sentimental ballads and songs — Bartlett's *A Dream*, Gheel's *For You Alone*, Bond's *I Love You Truly*, etc. The manly Peerce seems out of his element, but we're forgetting he once recorded that incredulous *Bluebird of Happiness*. This album will undoubtedly appeal to the same audience that "just loved" the latter.

Music appreciation in a capsule describes *Twilight Concert* and *Symphony in Brief*. The program of the former is a heterogeneous medley — *William Tell—Overture*, *Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2*, *Clair de lune*, etc., with the slow movement of Rachmaninoff's *Piano Concerto No. 2* and the song, *None But the Lonely Heart*, being thrown in for good measure. *Symphony in Brief* is an arbitrarily arranged group of movements from symphonies by Mozart, Beethoven, Brahms, Franck, etc. They don't sound right played in succession this way. Rodzinski and O'Connell handles the orchestral reins competently, but the former doesn't suggest as much heart for the job as the latter.

LP Re-Issues

(Continued from page 50)

than the original 78 rpm release that one realizes the worth of redoing a lot of older sets. The unpredictable Stokowski gives a splendid reading of the first three movements, then takes perverse liberties with the finale. Victor should have made an LP version of the recent Furtwängler performance which has captured the imagination of so many.

Kathleen Ferrier's recital of *Northumbrian, Elizabethan and Irish Folk Songs* (see August 1949 issue) has been transferred to a 10" LP disc (LPS-48) by London. Some of this singularly gifted contralto's best singing on records is to be found in this disc.

Pia Tassinari, wife of Tagliavini, is heard in an operatic recital on Cetra Soria's LP

50,033. The soprano is always a musically artist, though some of her offerings are not as convincing as they have been from other singers. Yet, there is more than rightful characterization in her tender, lyrical rendition of Santuzza's *Voi lo sapete*, even though we associate the character with more dramatically intense voices. Her arias from *Bohème*, *Adriana Lecouvreur*, *L'Amico Fritz* and *Mignon* offer appreciable artistry — less so her *Deh vieni* from *Nozze di Figaro*. The Cetra recording of the *Quartet* from Act III of *Bohème*, sung by Tassinari, Tagliavini, Huder and Mascherini, is included in the recital. Here, the soprano and her husband are heard to advantage but the balance of ensemble is not of the best.

Cetra-Soria has also assembled an LP recital of some previously imported singles by the opulent mezzo-soprano, Ebe Stignani (disc 50,031). There is some superb singing in this record, for there are few mezzo-sopranos today who have more vocal resourcefulness than Stignani. But her often unwieldy handling of her large voice tends to disrupt consistent smoothness of line. This is especially true in her renditions of the three arias from *Samson and Delilah*, sung in Italian, a language which seems too open for this essentially Gallic music. Her *Una voce poco fa* might have delighted Rossini for its richness of tone and amazing agility, and so might her singing of the unfamiliar *Ah, que giorno ognor rammento* from his neglected *Semiramide*. Her *Che farò* and *Divinità infernale* from Gluck's *Orfeo* and *Alceste* may not be classic renditions, but her tonal resourcefulness make them thrilling experiences.

At the last minute, Columbia sends in an LP version of the original Pathé recording of Saint-Saëns' favorite opera — *Samson et Delila* on three 12" discs, housed in a new package permitting complete English translation on its covers. The processing from 78 rpm to LP has been expertly handled, in fact the LP version sounds more resonantly realistic. Though the singing is uneven in this performance (see original review in November 1948 issue), it is nonetheless better than average, and inasmuch as the work is more of an oratorio than an opera it is a "natural" phonographic presentation.

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In the Popular Vein

by Enzo Archetti

▲TRANSFERS OF ALLEGIANCE from one major company to another are practically annual events, especially in the "classic" ranks of artists, but they also happen in the popular field. The latest to be announced is the appointment of Paul Weston as West Coast Director of Artists and Repertoire and West Coast Musical Director of Columbia Records' Popular Record Division.

Long a mainstay of the Capitol catalog, Paul Weston will probably soon appear with his own orchestra under the Columbia label playing his expert arrangements. In the meantime, Capitol clears its shelves by issuing a smooth Weston version of Gordon Jenkins' *Blue Prelude* (Capitol 1022) and a batch of Jo Staffords accompanied by his orchestra or his Dixie Eight, a jam group listing such illustrious names as Clyde Hurley, trumpet; Lou McGarity, trombone; Matty Matlock, clarinet; Eddie Miller, tenor; Nick Fatool, drums; George Van Eps, guitar; Jack Ryan, bass; and Milt Raskin, piano. *Pagan Love Song* (Capitol 1039) and *No Other Love*, which is an adaptation of a Chopin *Nocturne* (Capitol 1053) are Jo's parting shots under the Capitol banner for she, too, is transferring to Columbia.

Despite the many slick versions of *La vie en rose* that have appeared since the song became popular, one must go back to Edith Piaf's for the genuine Parisian flavor. Columbia was wise to reissue it on 38912 for, even with its 1936 recording, it still is the version.

Frankie Laine is one of Mercury's aces and is playing him well. Two LP's have been issued on which some of his best recordings have been assembled. *Frankie Laine Favorites* (MG 25007) features ballads and songs out *Frankie Laine* (MG 25027) gives a more varied picture of his talent. Included are *Mule Train* and *Cry of the Wild Goose*, but some of the other lesser known numbers are equally interesting. The quality of the recordings seems to have gained in transfer to LP.

Dream Girls (Victor WP-287, 3-45's) could be a pretty sickening collection of sentimentality if it were not for Tony Martin's smooth singing and Henri René's pellucid accompaniments. Heard in this combination, the girls become quite acceptable. Included are *Ramona*, *Diane*, *Sweet Sue*, *Rosalie*, *Dolores*, and *Laura* which just about runs the gamut from 1927 to 1945. Recording is splendid.

In spite of Vaughn Monroe's popularity as a singer of Western songs, I still find it hard to swallow his lugubrious style even when the music is lamentive. It began in 1948 with *Blue Shadows On the Trail*, and then *Cool Water* and *Riders In the Sky* really put him on top of the heap. Now he is capitalizing on his success in his first movie *Singing Guns* (in which *Mule Train* plays a prominent part) with an album entitled — *Vaughn Monroe Sings New Songs of the Old West* (Victor WP-289, 3-45's). I can think of a half a dozen Western artists I'd rather hear sing *Rounded Up In Glory*; *The Phantom Stage Coach*; etc.

The delightful Park Avenue Hill-Billie, Dorothy Shay, is still very delightful in *Mr.*

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Berlitz (Columbia 38916), *Jenny* (Columbia 38861), and *What Fer Didja* (Columbia 38651). Her sly naiveté and *double-entendre* are delicious. Except for *Fargo Fanny* on the reverse of 38651, the other alternates are not quite up to her best. Accompaniments are by George Wyle and Russ Black, and a chorus helps out in *Jenny*.

Old Man Atom is the record that started out innocently enough as a talking blues until someone decided that the words were subversive. The Company virtuously withdrew the record from circulation thereby giving it publicity that couldn't have been bought for money. All that fuss for a record that is hardly worth a second listen. On the reverse Sam Hinton also sings *Long John* (Columbia 38929).

Easily one of the best discs Nat "King" Cole has made is *Mona Lisa* (Capitol 1010). It is tender, well-paced, and done with conviction. The Les Baxter Chorus helps out. On the reverse is another interesting one called *The Greatest Inventor of Them All*, which could be termed a hymn of praise in *Mule Train* style. The Trio and the Chorus both chip in here. Another current release by Cole and the Trio, this time assisted by the Starlighters (*A Little Bit Independent* and *I'll Never Say "Never Again" Again*, Capitol 1068) is run-of-the-mill stuff. *Tunnel of Love* and *Home* (Capitol 1133) is better chiefly because Frank Loesser had something to do with one of the pieces. An orchestra directed by Pete Rugulo and a vocal group also take part.

Everybody gets into the act: Archie Bleyer, The Cherry Sisters, The Chordettes, Janette Davis, The Mariners, Bill Lawrence, The Little Godfreys, and even his summer replacement, Robert Q. Lewis. Arthur Godfrey was on vacation in Hawaii but a spate of rec-

ords by him and his radio cast kept his memory warm. Columbia issued eight of them almost simultaneously. Some choice bits of his sly, and often suggestive humor, you will surely want. Perhaps *If It Wasn't For Your Father* (38852); or *Go To Sleep, Go To Sleep, Go To Sleep* (38744) in which he teams up with Mary Martin for a splendid duet. Or his duets with Janette Davis, like *I Like That* (38894), or *Darn It, Baby, That's Love* (38815). Janette alone does *The Charms of the City Ain't Fer Me* and on the reverse she teams with Bill Lawrence in *Have You Ever Been Lonely?* (38890). Alone, Arthur Godfrey will satisfy your penchant for the sentimental with Nick Kenny's *Scattered Toys* (38785) and communicate to you his enthusiasm for Hawaii in *Hawaii* (38882). Robert Q. Lewis seems a bit pallid after hearing Godfrey himself but his *I'm In Love* and *Steven Got Even* (38877) are fun, too. The whole series is excellently recorded and Columbia would be well advised to assemble them on an LP as a sample of a Godfrey radio program.

Composed by the late Huddie Ledbetter, better known as Leadbelly, and arranged by John Lomax, *Goodnight, Irene* has a natural folksy quality both in tune and lyrics which should make it a definite part of this country's folk literature — if it doesn't get plugged to death by every popular song singer in the business. In every version that has come this way, the direct simplicity of the song has been distorted by inflated arrangements completely out of character. An insult has been added to injury by adding choruses to the already incongruous orchestral accompaniments. Dennis Day's (Victor 47-3870), Frank Sinatra's (Columbia 38892), and Jo Stafford's (Capitol 1142) are not the definitive versions. This song is a natural for Burl Ives.

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